Wild Woods and Waterways

By William Chalmers Covert

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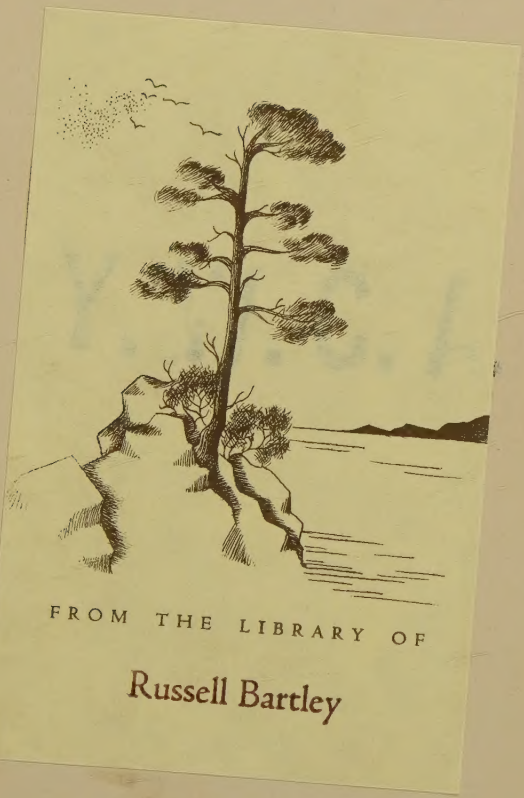

FROM THE LIBRARY OF
Russell Bartley

WILD WOODS AND WATERWAYS

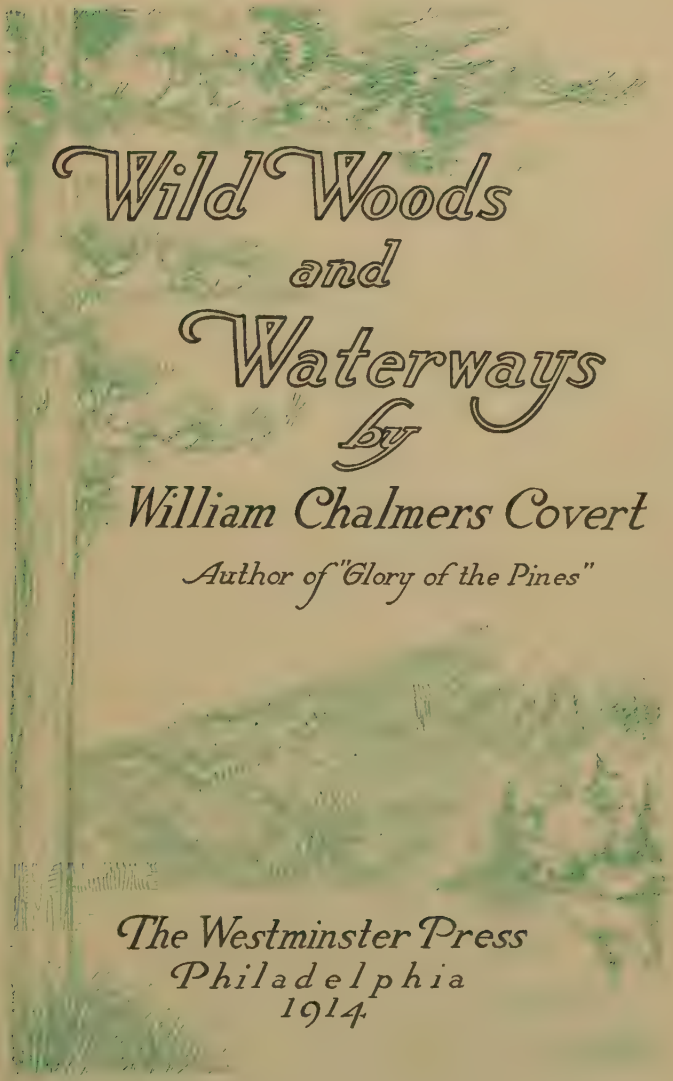
"There is no metre that's half so fine
As the lilt of the brook under rock and vine."

Wild Woods and Waterways

by

William Chalmers Covert

Author of "Glory of the Pines"



The Westminster Press
Philadelphia
1914

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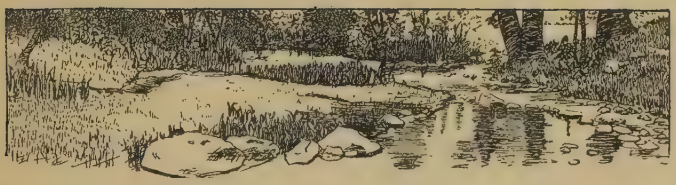
By William Chalmers Covert

TO
KATHARINE,
HUDSON AND SEWARD,
THREE CHILDREN
WHO HAVE SHARED WITH ME
MANY OF THE JOYS
OF THE SUMMER WOODS
THIS BOOK
IS
DEDICATED

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	INTRODUCTION	11
I.	THE WILD WOODS	19
II.	SOLITUDE AND COMPANIONSHIP	37
III.	"I GO A FISHING"	47
IV.	THE AU SABLE RIVER	59
V.	SPRINGTIME ON THE AU SABLE	69
VI.	TENT LIFE AND CAMPFIRE	79
VII.	THE ADIRONDACK WOODS	91
VIII.	LOVE, LIBERTY AND SUNRISE	101
IX.	WILDERNESS MEN	113
X.	OUT OF DOORS	127
XI.	THE STREAM	141
XII.	DOWN THE STREAM	155
XIII.	ON NORTHERN SHORES	175
XIV.	THE DUNES	189
XV.	THE LAST FRONTIER	203
XVI.	TO AND FROM THE MOUNTAINS	223
XVII.	THE SUMMER TIME	237

INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And tune his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither!
—Shakspere, "As You Like It."

A WELL-QUALIFIED physician, whose recent volume* has proved a most valuable contribution to the art of living, has well said that "much of our physiological need for recreation is in truth not need for rest, but for freer activity. We must bend and huddle over our work to get it done without mistakes, but the stoop leaves us cramped. We want to stretch. Self-control, . . . essential in good work, results not merely in the guidance of some energies, but in the suspension of many

* "What Men Live By," Dr. Richard C. Cabot.

more. In time repression may produce such atrophy and flaccidity of our mental muscles that we are incapable of play. But if the great muscles of the soul, unused in ordinary work, have not degenerated, one of the greatest blessings of play is to unleash our straining energies. Play balances work because it is one of the most whole-hearted things we do—almost as enfranchising as a sneeze. We need more totality flung into our days." The atmosphere that pervades the wilderness trail and envelops one as he lives close to nature in the wild woods, insulates the tired worker from all the ordinary power currents with which he deals, and sets him in a realm that makes for utmost liberty of body and soul.

On this very day of grace not only was the personal responsibility for several kinds of vital work forgotten, but so impervious was the wilderness life and so engaging its pursuits, that the sorrows of an awful war, which shock the moral sensibilities of the twentieth century, seemed but an echo of some strangely remote world.

But how could it be otherwise when the diverting program of the day was as it was? To begin with, there was a tramp of eight

miles through second growth, birch and hemlock, its interest heightened by an hour's search for a trail that left the old logging road thirty rods beyond the sand fill. This trail was so badly overgrown and thin that our eyes failed to discover it promptly. Then came the posing and studied gazing on the part of a fawn in its fine new shades of tan and pearl, after a retreat down the trail with a snow-white tail high in air, followed immediately by a brief interview with an unscared buck that was nosing his way through the tangle on my windward. This being a day for deer, a little later four others resting in the shaded thicket near our trail sprang snorting to their feet, and went thrashing through the woods with the noise of a small hurricane. And, besides, what could possibly be more diverting than the flushing of five grouse that rose whirring from under foot out of the brown wood grass? And certainly the brood of young mallards were most engaging as they paddled slowly across a vast pool of springs, the fountain-head of a trout stream, scarcely keeping beyond reach of my flies that were being dropped over the darting shadows beneath. The tiny squaw fire alongside the singing

outlet, and the bit of toasted cheese laid between two slices of graham bread that made the noon-day luncheon, were as preoccupying as the food was wholesome.

Such a day, filled with unusual experiences of the forest trail and stream, eclipses for the time being more important things and divests the anxious mind of all fatiguing cares, especially if, in the midst of its activities, your partner snaps a No. 10 fly hook, wearing the colors of the Royal Coachman, into your right cheek just below the point of the cheekbone, and brings everything to a standstill till the cruel little barb has been pushed through. And this task in itself is very diverting. The brown and white feathers and glued silk wrapping must be cut away carefully, and the shank sucked clean before the hook be turned and pressed out through the skin. This done, there are left two pink, painless points drawn clean by the friend's lips and incidentally proving that fly-fishing is not to be classed among the cruel sports.

In other words, here is that liberty and field for freer movement of mind and body which, according to Dr. Cabot, constitutes the chief requisite in recreation.

It is out of the experiences of these diverting and freedom-giving days that the following descriptive sketches are taken. Many of them have appeared in the pages of *The Continent* and *The American Lumberman*, and grateful acknowledgment is here made for the permission to reproduce this material.

Where there is in these chapters any effort to contribute scientific information touching botanical, geological, or ornithological matters, it would perhaps be better to admire the author's courage than to depend on the statements without consulting the prime authorities in such matters. Where experience has provided the data, be it of camp life or animal habits, these may be taken as incontestable.

I wish to speak of my deep personal debt to intimate companions whose fellowship has enriched forest joys. Mr. Ernst O. Heyl, Mr. Everett Sisson, Mr. Charles H. Davis, Mr. Clark L. Ring, Mr. G. M. Stark, and Dr. C. A. Lippincott, have interpreted for me anew the hospitality and beauty of the woods. The photographs here used are by Mr. Hall, an old-time friend of that noble wood-lover and out-of-door philosopher, the late William C. Gray.

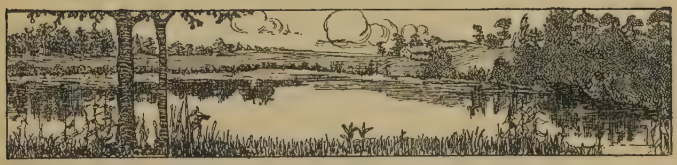
Any man with open eyes and a heart of love for the woods may fare forth and see these ordinary things of the wilderness and mountain woods here recounted. The unusual, the complex, and the artificial have found no place in these pages dedicated to companionships of the wild woods, in the joys of which physical recreation, mental vigor, and spiritual enrichment have been found. I have written down these observations of the beguiling things of forest pathways and camp fires, and the obscure beauties of the trout stream, hoping that others may be thereby called to the wholesome rest, real peace, and liberty of the woods, and, in consequence, to larger efficiency and achievement in the world's work.

WILLIAM CHALMERS COVERT.

August, 1914.

THE WILD WOODS

" Through brooding branches and embroidered leaves,
The sunshine filters in a golden rain."



CHAPTER I

THE WILD WOODS

THE woods is not merely a tree-covered area. It is a thing of your emotions—a kind of glorious, escaping phantasmagoria. You may enter the woods and talk very wisely about what you see. You may play the cruiser and tabulate the variety, age, health and general conditions of every tree. You may sketch the topography of the ground, marking streams, hills, springs, and ravines. You may write on the blue print, "The woods," and it may answer the purposes of the millman to whom woods is simply timber. But every true wilderness-lover knows that the thing thus described is not the thing he felt as he walked through the deep gloom of the twilight on his way to the camp. The pearly whiteness of the upper sky resting on the rose colors in

the west, made plain above him as he walked a shifting dome of dark-green filigree work and hung his heaven full of swaying lines and filmy traceries, while the atmosphere, heavy with sweet, native odors, hugged him in a soft, velvety embrace. Here was a psychological something that refused to be conveyed in the reports of the cruiser. It was much like a spell. You cannot describe a spell.

The fact is that the woods lie, as an iceberg does, with about seven-eighths of its exquisite self beneath the seen surface. Professor Sargent and Gifford Pinchot are woodsmen par excellence. They consort with trees as men consort with their fellows, loving them with a tenderness that is born of a recognition of their worth. They note the wrinkles on the horny skin of their bodies and know their approximate age, rejoicing in their youth or sorrowing at the signs of decrepitude. They look at gnarled branches and scarred trunks, and reason of tragedies that have marred their life. These wise men can overwhelm you with figures concerning the extent, variety, economic value, peril and prospect of the woods, but they cannot tell you what the woods is. It is easy and interesting for the man familiar

with the woods to recite the things that impress him as constituting its spell, and he does it item by item. It is like some one enumerating the details of Rosa Bonheur's "Horse Fair." He says, "This is a hoof, this a tail, this a muscle, this a shoulder." When he is done, you have a fine recitation in horse anatomy, but you have not a Rosa Bonheur picture. Books and wise men can do no more than give you the geography and history of the woods. You must drop your catalogue and descriptions of inanimate things, and go for yourself into the silent, speaking but unspoken companionship of that region where stands, forever undescribed, in fascinating mystery, the woods.

Have you felt the reverent silence that falls around you in the deep woods? It is a real sensation. You have an ever-present impulse to listen, and the silence, unbroken save by some bird-twitter or the soft, sibilant whe-eeoo in the boughs, lies upon you like some impressive benediction. It feeds the soul that fights for quietude in the midst of the world's clamor during the ten months of the year. It brings on a mood of inactivity, in no wise related to idleness. You stop again and again, and even in the midst of the engagedness of

the trout stream, you lay your rod aslant in the fork of some alder, before looking for the next cast, and, finding some open spot, sit down in a kind of ecstatic inebriation. There comes upon you a feeling so sweet and refreshing that it touches the deepest wearyings of your soul with restfulness. It seems like sacrilege to rise and again throw yourself, boots and body, into the stream.

This silence is not an absence of sound, for the woods' noises in the aggregate are bedlam. But the interesting jargon is muffled and practically lost in the vastness of things. When you give way to the peculiar frenzy that sometimes takes you in the wilderness woods, and yell, you feel the muffled effect of the infinity of air above you and the unwalled reaches around you. This unacoustic vastness swallows the earth sounds and produces the effect of silence upon the soul. There is a loneliness in the nearby voices of which from first to last you have a considerable chorus. This peculiar quality in the wood voices adds intensity to the solitude. There is a noticeably plaintive strain vibrating in the call of many wood birds. Long-drawn crescendoes break out of the twilight. There are tremulous

whinings and pathetic mewings that belong to the midnight and that set your imagination conjuring up all kinds of massacres of the innocents.

The loon begins on the fifth note of the scale and slides through the eighth to the third of the scale above, and when he concludes his mournful cry by a series of notes suggesting the shrieking laughter of some idiot, you feel the night to be dismal indeed. He seems to have the burdens of the whole world on his heart, yet mocks you in his sorrow with this insane laughing.

The whippoorwill rises from his bed at sunset and, flying as silently as a moth, fills his big extraordinary mouth with night-flying insects. He has a most persistent and melancholy call. It is strangely human, and his feeding never prevents his railing out upon the night air with his vigorous and wearying, monotonous cry. The rain crow is not a night bird, but adds to the delicious sense of loneliness of the woods by his mournful prophecies of storm, if farmers are to be believed. The soft, indistinct twitters of the night are unknown dialects of half-sleeping songsters. They may be lullabies for aroused babies that heard the ogre owl

when his soft wing brushed the window-casing of the bedroom, or they may be the love measures of young swains known as to their full sweetness by her who dreams in hidden bowers. But at all events, these and others like them are not the voices of wood companions. We seldom come near them as we do to the kingfisher or song sparrow. These are the voices that emphasize the beautiful loneliness of the woods.

The weird beauty of the shadows of the woods passes unobserved as a general thing, but the shadows leave their impression just the same. The early sun that filters a white silvery light through the trees, is a different orb from that which throws a kind of reddish-golden air about the trees at evening, and, for that matter, the high light of noon suggests the radiance of a third orb. The shadows on a well-beaten trail, where any length of vista is permitted, make a most pleasing and surprising appeal to the imagination. That vista suggests a corridor hung with a great collection of deeply colored, hazy, impressionist pictures. Your fancy can see the reeking green that Corot casts upon his wooded landscapes, and the strange blue-green that overspreads like an atmosphere the tree groups

and verdure features of Inness. Here and there are great, wide sketches done in burnt gold and amber, framed in lengths of deep shade and hung on the walls, whose dancing and swaying put life into what our imagination paints. Among the birches, on sunlit days, is a reflected glow from the whiteness of their velvet skins that well-nigh obviates shade. The effect is heightened when, in the fall, the frost has transformed every tree into a pyramid of gold. The very air seems saturated with gold.

The moon is the magic power-worker in the shadow world of the woods. Its pantomimic effects lack clear-cut lines, but for this very reason start more quickly the eager imagination. Through the overhanging boughs the moonbeams, falling at the proper angle, can lay as many shifting, changing patterns in white, black, and neutral middle tints, as any kaleidoscope can throw upon its ground glass. You lie on your bed—be it an air mattress which modern invention has provided for the woodsman whom civilization has enervated, or be it soft, springy, odorous boughs, stolen from some prosperous balsam—and look into the roof of the tent, and, as you look, close

your lids so as to reduce sight to a vanishing point. There above you, on the white ground, writhing, skipping athwart and back, go strange shapes and most freakish forms in a kind of wild, weird goblin dance. At one moment the boughs fall together, shadowing the roof in darkness. Then, together still, they fall aside and let the whole unhindered flood of moonlight fall upon you, making your tent roof shine in startling whiteness. Then breaking again into scratching, swishing single branches, the shadowy goblins dance through their endless figures, while your half-awakened mind hears the subdued and rhythmic music of the tree tops, to which they bow and pass and turn again. It is a midnight riot in the shadow world and worth waking to see.

There is but little suggestion of the possibilities in shade effect in a single detached tree. It makes about the same impression upon one's imagination as the sight of one or two soldiers. But those two soldiers, lost in massed thousands clad in war clothes, flying regimental insignia, and sweeping across a field under the unity of an understood order, make a profound impression. When, in great continuous forest reaches, the shade lies dark

and unbroken, suggesting a kind of beautiful, sunless underworld, with rifts high overhead through which the zenith lights fall as through skylights, and all is silence and wooded grandeur—then the full possibilities of shade can be realized.

There is a historical glamour about the woods. You know by a kind of instinct that something has occurred there, in these vast, obscure regions, before you entered. The chances for tragedy are enough to make it a certainty. Animal life is not a sweet mutuality in these retreats of solitude. You go but a little way before you must step over the decaying bones or mangled form of some unfortunate wood-dweller. He was worsted in the savage battle of wilderness life. A pile of drab-colored feathers marks the place of torture and death of a turtledove. If there be an undertone of brown, with gray-barred feathers, it was a young flicker who was reckless, as youth generally is, and perished in consequence. Here and there, broken-bodied pheasants and partridges from the oak openings and meadow swales, struggle into the woods to die a painful death from the shot wounds of an inaccurate marksman. The

little cottontailed rabbit hops leisurely down the trail, sniffing and nibbling from tender undergrowth, till a red fox, like a bandit, ambushes him and knifes him to death with his fangs. On a fallen tree trunk, as on the rude, raised dead gallery of the Luni, lie little bones in neat array. This was the scullery where some pirate owl prepared and ate a juicy quail, with an occasional young chicken from the barnyard of the farmer on the edge of the forest. Water birds, struggling in mid-air over the spoils of war, drop fishes among the dead pine needles, and if the victims be not dead of murder, they die of suffocation. Storms in the brooding season play havoc with the young life of the nest. If the mother bird has fought successfully marauding jay-birds and thievish squirrels, and kept her eggs to the hatching time, and the youngsters lie, large, awkward, and helpless in the shallow nest, then the peril of a wild windstorm is great. The screaming children are turned out into the darkness undressed, save in their soft nightgowns of pin feathers, and if they survive the fall from the nest, die, like unwalking babes, of cold and hunger. Infant mortality among the denizens of the forest is great.

But the species persist, and over the graves of these little songsters next summer another happy chorus of brothers and sisters will rise and sing. Thus the world of birds and men goes on.

. . . . . .

The prodigality of nature is more apparent in the woods than anywhere else. She is wanton and reckless in the quantity of her provisions. She awaits no demand. She bides the bidding of no necessity. Economy is a word born of poor, meager little humanity. Of it the woods has been in everlasting disregard. Walk the forest ways where no ax has ever come, and see the prodigious wealth of nature. The high openings are strewn thick with delicious berries that have risen and rotted untasted for a thousand years. You who have been higgling in the early summer markets over pints and quarts, take note! Amid the ungathered sweets, throw yourself down on that part of your anatomy on which Lord Macaulay rested when at four and a half years of age he lay before the fire devouring Cæsar's Commentaries, and draw your prone self slowly along pondering as you eat of the uneaten wastage of nature.

Flowers are here in unseen millions. They exhale, but no one inhales. And they throw out their eager pollen upon the air, and glue it to the legs of swarming insects, as though extermination were threatened and, therefore, not one powdery atom could be lost. Trees grow so thick that, like hungry sufferers in an overpopulated famine district, they rob one another. Roots fight for room and nourishing boughs fight for diameter and air space. Shaggy veterans lie, unburied but not unhonored, among green young stalwarts. Debris here would feed the fires of every cold, empty hearth of poverty in the world, if it could be gathered. Undergrowth rises blinding thick. Everything is so suggestive of superabundance that it mocks continually the pinching economy of men. The Great Forester has no smallness in his conceptions of what constitutes enough. He is all the time guaranteeing against a deficit in material by a reserve of age-long accumulations and stupendous oversupply.

A hilltop in an unbroken woods is a matter of peculiar interest to the wayfaring woodsman. It is seldom discoverable from the trail till you strike its foot. If it be an abrupt and

precipitous thing, it generally wears on its rugged sides a mantle of swinging vines and short, tufted bushes. Here and there jagged elbows of granite, high aloft, make picturesque footing for small pines, and these bird-planted conifers prosper in the face of surprising odds. Ferns and columbine in moist crevices make the seamed and fissured face of the hill beautiful, and sometimes the dropping of waters into hidden caverns behind this screen of verdure tinkles and resounds with the music to which nymphs dance in the moonlight. If you accept the invitation of the spring to rest a while, the face wall of the hill affords fine facility for a little cooking fire, over which to brew the tea. It makes a cover and chimney jamb against which to lay the little fire. When the odorous twigs and needles have caught and set going the rough and solid fuel, the smoke rolls up the wall and creeps along its rugged face like some uncanny spirit seeking entrance to its underground limbo. The scorched and discolored tin pail, with closed lid swinging over the somewhat reduced fire, rivals any tea cozy that ever aided the brewing of this delicious midwood beverage.

Take a biscuit from your knapsack, drop a

lump of sugar in your tin cup, stir it with a broken branch of sassafras, put your tired back snug against the wall of the hill, and then, if you be not a dullard, your mind, more hungry even than your stomach, falls into a kind of imaginative rioting with which your tea and biscuit have but little to do. The beauty of solitude, the companionship of loneliness, the refreshing buoyancy of the air purified by the ozone breathed from the leaves, together with the sweet sense of your untrammeled and burdenless life, induce a deep-souled joy that is positively delicious.

. . . . . .

It is no wonder our Druid ancestors worshipped here. Their barbarian souls felt the spell of the woods. They carried their cruel altars away from the sunlit sea. René Menard and his Jesuit pilgrims died loving the dark woods, whose red tribes they sought to save. Their pathetic journals tell of a passion for the forest stillness and mountain grandeur of our American continent, that reveals a beautiful human side. Daniel Boone loved the vastness and silence of the limitless West and gave us Kentucky a generation earlier than it might otherwise have come to us. Lewis and Clark,

with Marcus Whitman and Spaulding, who came after, were forest-lovers before they were agents of Jefferson, and, loving the darkness and loneliness of the forest ways, they gave us Oregon.

We cannot measure the joy and peace that were born into the hearts of old pioneers through their intimate acquaintance with the woods, nor can we ever know the sharpness of their sorrow over the decay of our glorious American forests and the coming of a treeless civilization.

SOLITUDE AND COMPANIONSHIP

CHAPTER II

SOLITUDE AND COMPANIONSHIP

MEN do not interest us in the most fascinating phases of nature by talking to us about her as a big, botanical specimen. This is not the fault of the Latin derivatives with which wise men seem bound to clog the currents of human understanding of even the commonest things. It is rather to be laid to that feeling of unwelcome restraint forced upon us by the niceties and definite sharpness insisted upon by academic inquiry. We rebel against anything like this when we are hungry for the freedom and fellowship of the out-of-doors. We may affect a delight in a scientific understanding of nature, and be glad

that we know what men mean when they talk of stamens and pistils and the complex classifications of the whole natural world, but when we want a week of unfettered joy in nature, we invariably put into the background our analytical and structural wisdom, and seek a broad, sentimental communion with her. We lie down under the quivering boughs of a birch tree that rises in pyramidal shape for thirty feet above us, and in the iridescent atmosphere reflected from the shining of its white-coated trunk we actually do not care to pursue the question as to whether this be *Betula alba*, or *Betula papyrifera* or *Betula lutea*. We are out of academic connections and are not sorry. We look up through the rustling canopy of trim, clear-cut leaves that are singing with long, low sound waves pitched to the swishing monotone of the trout stream hidden close at hand, and instead of seeing materials for botanical exploitation, we pass into an indefinite but refreshing and enriching fellowship with the whole wild world about us. While we may be ready to affirm this theory, we prefer not to be compelled to state the metaphysical grounds that underlie the conclusion. This might take us into a class-room

atmosphere against our will. It is perhaps enough to state that it may be nothing more than the difference in the feelings one has in visiting with an intimate, vivacious and communicating friend, and in studying with minute care and anatomical wisdom that same friend's skeleton in a laboratory. For personal pleasure we choose the first, though for world progress we may be compelled to include the second.

Out in the woods our minds go back to the bedlam of noises we have left behind us. These ungrateful sounds that rise out of the coarse, dirty, mechanical world of commerce shorten men's lives. It cannot be otherwise. The long, horrible wail of steam whistles—so uncalled-for in these days of clocks at a dollar, and guaranteed—that breaks the dawn, and well-nigh breaks the delicately poised chain-bones of the ear, together with the milder but rasping and incessant noises of the home and shop and street, are wearying to an almost fatal degree to the multiplex sensorium. We can never tell how unbroken and burdening is the tension of resistance in the presence of the shocking noises of the busy world until we have come into the serene silence of the

woods. The dead roar of traffic, the hum of wheels and shuttles, the impudent squawk of the automobile, are the things that drive to a state of panic our shrinking nerves. But they are quite impossible even as memories in the green-carpeted world and velvety atmosphere of the woods. Soothed by this quiet, healing serenity, broken in upon by no sounds save the soft-stopped voicings of the wilderness, by the quaint day sounds of birds and the altered voices of the night—more weird, more melancholy, more suggestive of solitude than anything spoken in the day—we can begin to measure the weight and violence of those noises of the city with which we have grown so familiar as to be unconscious of them.

. . . . . .

It is not to be wondered at that meditation, as an intellectual process with a spiritual purpose, is passing. It is even easy to see how the very capacity for such a thing is passing also. The distractedness of modern life is fatal to profound and continued thinking. The mind is apparently yielding up its capacity for anything except intermittent work. Men are not alone and sufficiently detached to enjoy the exclusive companionship of their own

minds. They do not, therefore, know the mind's high needs nor challenge its possessions nor ponder its destiny. We have grown sensitive and fearful about retiring from the world, lest some one miss our presence, or some event occur of which we could not know. We are slaves and cowards before the telephone call and the personal card of the visitor. Our consciences keep our ears ever open and our hearts tender to the approach of things of business or society or charity. Life becomes crammed and choked with an endless variety of superficial things of the passing day. We therefore skim the tops of things. We think lightly of great themes, and leave the weighty problems to the heaven-blest souls who are more detached from this exacting old world than we. When the door bell rings, we let the vision which we were striving to draw to our level of life wait until we hear the sad story of some society's adversity or some appealing description of how we can grind an ax for some other man's friend. We turn again to seize the gradually retreating vision with our ardor sapped, when some domestic duty must be met under the life-long contract, and so the distractions multiply. They grow more imperious and insistent

as life widens. A business man stands out in this wild current and bids for these distracting things. So it comes to pass that high, prolonged and unbroken thinking on themes that concern the great issues of life is well-nigh impossible to the ordinary man. We are all so eager, so alert and so continually active that we do not realize the importance of nourishing and enriching the soul with the wealth and strength that come through the old practice of meditation.

A man, alone, fishing a stream noisy with its own sweet voice, shut out from the world by leafy arbors and long, sweeping canopies of tree tops, with the consciousness solacing him that the market noises and the whole world of business are as though they had never been, is impelled to thoughtfulness. Great themes suggest themselves, and a strange lucidity surrounds the once befogged problems, as the idle fisherman thinks about them. The world of work, sorrow and suffering presents an aspect less inexplicable when from the leafy perspective he looks toward it. Some of his own prejudices subside and a gentler spirit comes in to possess him while he thinks of those things which out in the world angered and perplexed him.

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Sacrificing a fly on an inaccessible root that rose to his cast instead of the trout lying under it, the angler finds a friendly cedar trunk for a moment of rest and repairing. The fly book is at hand, but a gray squirrel and a bluejay are waging a wordy battle and he is interested in the methods of the combatants and the final issue of the trouble. He is about to decide whether he will try a Royal Coachman or a Grizzly King, and he looks aloft to scan the color of the sky and note the time of day by the sun, for this must weigh in the scales of his judgment when he decides what lure the wary trout will probably take. On a bare limb not forty yards away, a kindergarten school is in session. It is a class of rowdies, but with great possibilities wrapped up in their tousled coats. A kingfisher mother has her young brood out for a lesson in field tactics and general deportment. She is an expert drillmaster, and every son of his mother is as docile as her impatience could ask. Repairs can wait the conclusion of these kindergarten proceedings. There is an object lesson below. A small dead fish floats in the pool. The teacher screams and drops like a blue-tinged bolt into the pool, rising with the fish. Leaving

it on the surface, she rises to her teaching seat and pushes every learner to the practice of her theory. One by one they make the plunge and rise successfully or unsuccessfully, but always screaming with delight, to the mother's side. The interested fisherman moves to free his shoulders from the strain of his slowly filling creel—and school is out! Turning to his book and choosing a fly, he finds all the fevered impatience that drives him pell-mell in the busy world gone, and a spell of delicious serenity steadying his fingers. The fever and tension of life in the markets have subsided, and in this forest nook he has learned to measure life with a new and truer understanding. Not that he hates the rushing world nor despises its prizes, but he now sees that men may make life a little, unthinking round of superficial activities, and throw away the priceless gifts and the best capacities of soul by forgetting the infilling joys of solitude and the rich meanings of rest.

"I GO A FISHING"

CHAPTER III

"I GO A FISHING"

TO be honest with the text, we are compelled to say that the apostle spoke to his fellow-craftsmen as a thrifty, unromantic fishmonger, under motives exclusively commercial, when he said to them, "I go a fishing."

It was nothing against Peter that he knew no other motives in his fishing than the motives of the market place. When he expressed this notable intention, it was simply the intention of a business man to proceed on a business trip. It was nothing to him but the inevitable toil of a poor man, recurring after a brief interval, and the expedition to be undertaken was so vitally related to his daily bread that

we may conjecture it to have been a thousand miles from recreation. We have here simply a Galilean fisherman, in a hard fight with competitors and haggling buyers, and doubtless with a large family on his hands, coming forward to take up the old burden of an accustomed industry that knew none of the joys of a pastime.

But let us waste no sympathy on Peter because his fishing was the grind of drudging labor, and the excursion about to take place thereby bereft of all pleasurable qualities. The fact is, there was no fun in Peter's mode of fishing, anyway. The method then in vogue was such a dead-sure, wholesale, unfair process that it gave no chance for the excitement of those rare and lofty pleasures of game-fishing as we know them to-day. To throw a net around a school of fish feeding on the shoals and by brute force to drag them ashore, is a procedure so devoid of fair play and the sentiment of sport that it can appeal to nothing in a man but the fish-market spirit. That some one must do this kind of work and thus supply the market stalls with a food that has been a staple necessity since human appetite discovered its

delicious edibility, no one will deny, but the mode of capture must not be allowed in the catalogue of sports that rejuvenate the race by appealing to its native love of romantic adventure and its manly regard for fair play and an even battle. Our conclusion is that, although a fine misinterpretation of the text sets Peter before the world as the patron saint of this, the noblest pastime, history sees him not as an eager sportsman, but as a plodding purveyor to the Capernaum markets.

But Peter's method of taking fish is not the only method that suggests the market by giving the whole vantage ground to the fisherman. Among the sins of the anglers of our day we must give conspicuous place to that of game gluttony. Abroad among fishermen is a barbarous greed for large catches that begets and sustains all kinds of unfair methods of fishing. The use of bait for taking high-born game fish that can be secured by nobler methods is unfair, and appeals only to the fishmonger spirit in a man.

To drop a baited hook into the foaming swirl of a trout stream and let it float into the well-nigh inaccessible cover and past the nose of an honest, free-fighting trout, is to rob him

of every chance of self-defense in the art of which he is a master. It is an insult to his native candor and a stultification of his traditional wariness, to have men make effort to take him in such a one-sided, cocksure, ungentlemanly contest. This is something far removed from the inspiriting pleasures of meeting noble game in a fair fight. When the often-baffled but ever-expectant angler, thigh deep in the cold, rushing stream, now overarched by tangled alders, now fringed by mossy roots and buttercups, stands to cast a leaderful of his choice flies toward an inviting but difficult cover across the stream, and drop them as softly as a company of delicate May flies settling to their doom on that wild surface, then you may feel sure that a fair battle is on between two knightly contestants! The field is free! The vantage is mutual and the victory uncertain to the end. The angler feels that something is there, and with tense but repressed excitement gives himself to the task of proving his surmises. His first effort to put his bright lures in the right spot fails. His backcast was not sufficiently deliberate and the line snarls. The second cast rides well above the water and in fine direction, but too

high, and the "dropper" fouls in the overhanging limb. The moment would induce exasperation had not grace and the strengthening discipline of the fisherman's school done its work. It is now apparent to the busy angler that he has one side of a difficult proposition, and the gamy recluse that he desires to call forth from his hiding has the other. There is no panic or disorder below the surface and he is encouraged. When at last, on the fourth cast, his flies reach their desired destination and drop with deceptive lightness at the lower end of the swirl as it passes under the shelving rocks, the success of the effort is so nearly scientific that it is its own reward. But while enjoying the triumph of his cast in the presence of such difficulties, yes, in the very instant of the happy drop, there is a darting shadow from beneath the rock, a quick break of the surface under a fly, a fierce strike that suggests an electric shock, and a tugging at the line now taut and swishing on the swaying rod. The delicate little feathered lure has done its painless work, and the earnest angler feels that he is about to win a battle where odds are against him.

Now comes the critical work. Every heart-

beat is a stage in a series of breathless crises. Many things may happen. The much engaged angler must surely keep the strain of the tugging captive's weight far down the length of his upright, willowy rod, and avoid the dangers of a slack line. He must guard against underfouling, and preserve his self-control. There certainly will be some singing by the reel and a musical swish by the line as it cuts the water, and some breaking of the surface. But victory will come. Then he will know the feelings of the fair-fighting, victorious cavalier of the trout stream instead of the unspiced, surfeited satisfaction of the game glutton who wins in the quantity of his catch, but loses in the quality of his self-respect and hence the full measure of happiness. This spirit of the gentle sportsman not only insures fair methods of taking fish, but implies a fine susceptibility in the angler toward everything accompanying the enterprise. He takes an impressionable soul with him and hears and sees much that otherwise would escape him. Scenery addresses him personally and delights him with a companionship as of an interesting personality. Choice bits of combined stream and hill and verdure become with him definite and

unforgettable memories that rise to fertilize his imagination in the sterile winter time. The primeval quality of the woods, the quaint ways of guides and wood folk, their deep, quiet natures, their refreshing simplicity and interesting narrowness, all bring special delight as they conspire to effect for him a perfect detachment from everything artificial. Birds and shy wood-life keep him alert at every turn. The sunsets engage him. The night sky over him and the weird night sounds around him lend fine enchantment to his situation, while every other phase of nature in his grateful solitude blooms into attractive conspicuity for his eager and reciprocating soul.

This is a disposition, a combination of constitutional qualities, that always guarantees perfect recreation and a satisfying excursion apart from a loaded creel. It also makes bait-fishing for strictly game fish repellant.

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In their sketches of outing trips, men have not given adequate treatment to the joys of getting ready to go. These are among the most keen and unalloyed pleasures of life, and writers who begin their interesting stories upon arrival at the camp or stream leave unwritten one

of the most highly attractive chapters of every excursion.

It may be that these sensations are so subtle and composite that they cannot be described, and wise men, knowing their limitations, keep quiet. It is, after all, a question of very elaborate self-consciousness, and a scientific study of it would lead us into a most inappropriate use of metaphysics. Only those that have gone know the delights of preparation. There is a boyish eagerness, which conventional dignity compels us to repress, and a fine zest accompanying every stage of preparation. The coming event casts a most fascinating shadow before it. The date and the destination having been settled, a new spirit comes upon one.

Conversation with friends inevitably veers to the new quarter and the vocabulary betokens that fresh currents of thought are running. Unbidden pictures of camp and stream and fractured memories of previous trips rise to whet the growing eagerness. A sense of freedom from responsibility takes hold of a man even while engaged in the final struggle with duties crowding forward to be discharged, and he knows his mind has already read its

emancipation proclamation and gone on, expecting the body to follow. Things relevant to the woods but irrelevant to business sweep into mind on the tide of new feelings now surging within. The paraphernalia of tent and tackle have an exhilarating contagion in their touch. To lay hold on these things once again seems to short-circuit the ever fresh and reviving forces of nature and we are delightfully shocked and rejuvenated. The fly book must be gone over, that the waste of last year may be repaired. The rods must be jointed and whipped in air a few times, while fancies and hopes and day-dreams that the touch of these fine companions of the woods inspires, come forward to complete the preparation of mind essential to a perfect enjoyment of the pilgrimage to the sacred shrines of forest and stream.

The joys of getting off are so recreative and interesting that a genuine wood-lover lately said he often went on with the fascinating duties of preparation long after some sudden but cruel emergency in business had made his excursion impossible.

THE AU SABLE RIVER

CHAPTER IV

THE AU SABLE RIVER

THE Au Sable River is the finest trout stream in the Middle West. It is not far away from the great centers of population according to geographical measurements, but if the quantity and quality of its remoteness be judged by the absence of the artificial, and its separateness from the wearisome sights and sounds of cities, miles do not measure the distance. It drains the northeast watershed of the State of Michigan and draws its delicious waters from the cool lakes and hidden springs of a natural game preserve thousands of square miles in area. It falls from a clean, wind-swept plateau about six

hundred feet on its course of one hundred and fifty miles to Lake Huron. This gives vigor and fine aëration to its waters.

The shadows of the ravaged pine forests seem to linger yet in this stream, for as it breaks its crooked and tumultuous way through the foliage of a rich, new, native stock, there is a suggestion of sadness in its voice, as of one bereft of a rightful companionship. Lumber barons made their millions by tearing down in twenty years what it took God two thousand years to erect. It was a ruthless wounding of nature in her pristine beauty and completeness. But there is in nature such an indomitable spirit of rebound that the wound has already healed, and a magnificent tangle of hardwood and scrubby second growth spreads over those scarred ruins and crowds close upon the margin of the stream. In this the deer and other game find feeding and cover. The south branch of this stream has a beauty all its own, as it bisects for sixty miles a wholly uninhabited country. The varied conditions of its waters afford fine opportunity for brook and rainbow trout, and give the stream wide renown.

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The river sweeps up to the little village of Roscommon, within the length of two city blocks of the railway station, as if to tantalize any Izaak Waltons who might be caged in passing Pullman cars. Orvie, the guide that met us, had two helpers. One was a young, happy, ignorant trapper, who knew the language and traits of every forest animal with the proverbial instinct of a hunter. He reveled in the life of the woods and felt no chaffings at the narrow bounds that shut him in. He rebuked our ambitions the moment we saw him. The other helper was a lean, wiry man of nearly seventy years, who spoke the vocabulary of a lifelong woodsman, and told numberless stories of his prowess in a quaint style that was charmingly enforced by his uncouth but engaging personality.

We pushed off in three flat-bottomed boats, with a drizzling rain falling. The green trees locked branches overhead and shut us into a veritable subway of verdure. For five miles scarcely a word or signal was interchanged. The conversation of the parlor car, pleasant enough in its place, seemed inappropriate. Our spirits as well as our vocabulary were slowly adjusting themselves to the new situa-

tion. It was an environment that compelled rest.

The inventory of our human wants exhibited small range and variety. To eat, to sleep, "to look up at the stars," with occasionally an incidental cast of feathery lures on the singing surface of the stream, followed by a darting shadow, a splash, a strike, and—well, every man who has felt the exhilarating tug of a ten-inch trout on a five-ounce rod knows the rest! This seemed the full catalogue of our present desires.

The first meal from the sturdy hand of the cook was not æsthetically laid after the pattern of tables photographed for housekeeping journals; but the bacon was as sweet as nuts; the eggs, though disheveled and overdone, could not have made more convincing appeal to the palate had they come from the fanciest hennery in the state, and the potatoes, boiled in spring water, fell into powder on the plates. To sit under the evening sky before such a table, in the company of congenial friends, and attack these health-giving edibles with an appetite whetted by forest ozone and arduous work, is the acme of things tonic and resuscitating. That first meal was a revelation.

With quizzical faces the guides drew apart for a conference in subdued monotone. They threw distressed glances at the table, and, when asked the trouble, replied, "Well, when you'se three fellows eats at one meal what we had cooked for six, why, somebody's got to go to town for more stuff; that's all." The inevitable was acknowledged and more supplies were ordered.

The conversation soon narrowed down to camp horizons and our interest was gradually drawn away from the things of the world that had nearly worked us to death, and centered instead upon these things given to rehabilitate us.

The wild winds of the night, the soaking rain, the pestering mosquitoes, the hard labor, the luckless day, all fell into one benign purpose of rest-giving distraction. Things came, and they were taken as they came, without protest. We slept on beds of boughs and breathed the healing perfume from pillows made of grain bags stuffed with balsam needles. In the dead of the night, when a brief period of wakefulness would give us the chance, we thought of the unbroken silence of this great world of the woods in which we were hidden,

and these obscured paths which open before the tired feet of workers in order that they may enter and find rest. There is no balm for overstrained nerves like the awesome silence of the great forest. Each day brings a pleasing sameness with never a suggestion of monotony.

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The guides ate their trout, of which we had an abundance, in a fashion more effective for accomplishing the purpose in hand than for sustaining any of the conventionalities that have grown up about the art of eating. The brown, crisp trout was taken by head and tail with the two hands, and passed like a boy's mouth organ through the teeth, backward and forward, and lo! the juicy, pink meat had been removed, leaving the stubborn vertebræ and ramifying bones intact. It was the swift way of a hungry man, and in good keeping with the recognized camp code of etiquette.

What a sight for the frenzied delight of fishermen! The crimson and the iridescent sheen above the rich grays, the varying blacks and fine white, make the color scheme of the brook trout matchless! He is a prince among

game fish, and when finally we turned from his lovely haunts and found ourselves on the way back to the dirt and clamor and serfdom of toil, we felt as those who had been keeping company with the highborn denizens of the wilderness.

SPRINGTIME ON THE AU SABLE

"A soft, insistent sound of foam
That filled with sleep the forest's dome."

CHAPTER V

SPRINGTIME ON THE AU SABLE

MEN seeking to escape the noise and fury of civilization feel that the end has been accomplished most satisfactorily if, at the point of farthest removal, an Indian rises into their landscape. He is something so detached from the great complexity of the city dweller's life, and in such traditional association with the untrammeled, irresponsible life of the forest, that his presence guarantees the atmosphere for which nerve-fagged men are looking.

It was a most agreeable coincidence when we found old Shoppanagons, the chief ranger of the fading forests of northern Michigan, and the most noted tribesman of the Ojibways,

on the station platform where our train dropped us in the sun of the spring afternoon. To us, weary of the strain of life's constant duties and hungering for the isolation of the woods, the sight of the old chieftain was proof that we were nearing the promised land. He was a proud relic of a race of warriors and close to one hundred years old, straight and supple-jointed as a man of forty. For three-quarters of a century he had been the presiding genius of the Au Sable country, fishing and trapping and leading the sportsmen to the feeding grounds of bear and deer and rainbow trout in the wild waters of his beloved stream.

The old ranger and his fellows are rapidly receding features in the landscape of the north. They gloried in the regal splendors of a home in pine forests as beautiful as anything America ever produced until white men took hold of its pillars and changed the beauty and grandeur to chaos and desolation. Robbed of their ancient environment, they are gradually gaining in manhood. The wildness and animalism within are passing like the barbaric garments without. Instead of whooping through the trails in paint and feathers they

now nurse a tiny farm and serve for pay the fishing wood-lovers of the city.

Grayling is a village whose name commemorates one of the noblest species of game fish that the greed of the sportsman and slack legislation ever eliminated from Michigan waters. It lies about two hundred miles north of Detroit on the crest of a lofty sand ridge that crosses the northern apex of the southern peninsula. It was once in the heart of well-nigh limitless pine. Here one touches the main branch of the Au Sable. The river has qualities that guarantee its perpetuity as a trout preserve. The unreclaimable quality of the deforested and excessively sandy country through which it flows for two hundred miles means sparse settlements at most.

To the hurried pilgrim with but a few days at his disposal here is accessibility. We alighted from our train at half-past three, and within two hours and a half had driven ten miles through the green second growth, now hiding the scars of the woodsman's devastation, to a point twenty-five miles by the stream from Grayling. We found ourselves in an exclusive community of thirty-eight souls, whose whole interest centered in the beautiful

stream whose waters the men had fought for nearly twenty-five years. The men were strong, obliging, tender-hearted fellows to whom life had brought but little. The women were silent, sad-eyed, patient, caring for the fishermen guests with slavish efforts to suit every whim. The children were abundant, schoolless and happy. A family of eight cheered the hearth of Rube, a genial guide, and so vigorous were they that they had never needed a physician, not even at their birth.

We found fine accommodations at our disposal. A clean, sweet-smelling, single-roomed cabin of straight Norways, and about twenty by thirty feet in its dimensions, received us. The balsam boughs were comfortable springs and mattresses, and the camp fire a square, stocky, wood-burning stove in the middle of the floor. The stream was near at hand, and as the sun went down, bringing on the twilight, we heard its voice in a vesper song. It was the deep, continuous anthem of a full river, and not the fussy, rollicking, broken music of the brook. After the supper, for which the ride over the cool sand hills had given appetite, our eagerness for the stream could no longer be restrained.

As the dusk was about to deepen into unwelcome darkness, the moon rose full and clear and begot a new world. The stream by moonlight is a thing of unearthly beauty. It sweeps with spectral whiteness through the grassy openings of the lowlands, here silent and shining like molten silver, there broken, noisy, foam-crested, and passes swiftly into the darkness of the overhanging cedars. It was a night for the courtship of the rainbow trout. Everything was favorable. The air was sharp and clear. The day wind was at rest. The yellow radiance of the moon filled the atmosphere with transparent gold. Two of us stepped into the stream at a sharp bend above a long reach of good water for the night feeding. It was not a really serious effort on our part. The situation was well-nigh too artistic to admit of the practical. The setting of things was conducive to fellowship and ecstasy. We pushed our heavy feet slowly over the slippery stones on the floor of the stream, with the water piling up behind us and breaking in cold, noisy cataracts around our waists. Our casting was an exercise of pure faith guided by experience. Our lines were invisible, but sang to assure us that they

were at work. The flies dropped unseen in the quivering moonlight and rode out the slack, only to be lifted and sent again. The rainbows were certainly at home. A cast down the wake of the moon brought a prompt rise and fine swirl. A quick recovery and a drop in the same shadowy place found and hooked the inquisitive fellow. Again and again we laid our lures on that shining surface, and again and again found the eager rainbows ready for us, and when we climbed out of the stream we felt not so much that we had been fishing as that we had been two very small features in a marvelously beautiful moonlight scene.

The pleasure of passing down such a stream as this in a fishing boat is rare. The guide uses a stiff, steel-shod steering pole, and in the rapids holds his boat that one may try a cast toward some prepossessing nook, where, he encouragingly announces, a large one was but recently taken. The return to camp against five miles of swift water is a task that pleases these big-lunged woodsmen. To lie back and give yourself to revery and observation while the guide pushes you homeward is to make yourself ready and receptive before

a constantly shifting beauty of wood and stream and sky. To pass from a long stretch of wild, warring waters into a deep, smooth, noiseless channel, where massive-boughed cedars wall you in and fairly overarch you and lay around you upon the reflecting surface their fadeless green, is to find yourself awed into a happy, inactive silence. One feels that he has glided suddenly into the stately and impressive beauty of a vast cathedral corridor hung with rich tapestries and vaulted over with some great artist's illusion of blue sky and flying clouds. The soft, subduing influence that lives in the great, silent sanctuaries of the world steals upon you, and pilgrim and guide alike regretfully pass once more into the open.

To spend even a few days in the alternating experiences and varying beauties of this stream is to be rejuvenated. To share its fascinating solitude, to take part in its hard work, to capture a few of its splendid trout, and to drink of its sweet water and pure air, is to charge every storage cell of the nervous system with new power and hang the memory full of rare, fadeless pictures, as cheering as they are unforgetable.

TENT LIFE AND CAMP FIRE

CHAPTER VI

TENT LIFE AND CAMP FIRE

TEMPORARY life in the woods calls for a tent—always a charming touch to the green landscape and a grateful refuge to the tired woods lover. There is both history and sentiment behind the tent as a place of human habitation. When the race first betook itself to its shelter we shall never know, but it was not one moment too soon. It was in the early stages of racial development, and long before the fixity and complexity of segregated life of the city had come. It probably stood for the next step in progress after the rooftree. It is a vestige of the nomadic life of oriental plainsmen and of that

age when our ancestors wanted mobility in the family and portability in household effects in order to attack swiftly or elude silently the marauding enemy. It was originally an effort to carry the shade and shelter of the mountain forest or oasis palms out into the precarious and exposed life of the plains.

The coming of brick and hewn cedar, and the passion for architecture, early displaced this chief feature of the simple life of our ancestors.

It makes one well-nigh despair of the home love and domestic happiness of the future, not to speak of the continued health of brain and nerve and immortal soul of the men of our day, to recall the tent and tent life of Abraham and his family on the wind-swept plains, and then note the skyscraping, child-hating, noise-ridden, spare-bedless, modern apartment house of the city, where men live on top of one another in a mutual, unneighborly strangeness. The bank accounts of the landlords grow thereby, but the human family, robbed of the freedom of its ancient tent and tent life, becomes homeless and childless and a victim of nervous prostration.

The early life of Israel was a tent life. Before the Israelites settled to agriculture and

city living, they lived and bartered and worshiped in tents. Knowing how conducive to good lungs and sound digestion life under a tent roof is, we can easily see close connection between the historic vigor of the Jew and the tenacious character of his racial qualities, and the long period of his out-of-door life.

Any good tent well stretched over a firm ridge pole and properly staked and trenched is good enough. It must be on high ground, if possible, and in the neighborhood of strong, healthy trees, so as to avoid the peril of falling dead limbs. These dead limbs often fall without the slightest apparent cause, and crash through the boughs to the ground with a roar and thud that in the silence of the night is nothing short of terrific. A dooryard for the camp fire and a convenient and sheltered spot for the cook must be planned. Prevailing winds and the topography must determine the front door as well as the other camp features.

Inside the tent, the bed is the only important consideration. Care and skill are required here lest a romantic thing become rheumatic. Short, springy balsam boughs when laid from twelve to eighteen inches deep and covered with blankets make something so sweetly

odorous and comfortable that even a weary fisherman gladly wakens for brief intervals during the night, in order to realize the soft, fragrant, drowsy character of his resting place. The bed must be stirred and replenished daily. After the camp fire has died down and the burden of welcome weariness has become unbearable, the only thing left for one to do is to turn and creep like a baby into the waiting bed and, snuggling close to the old Mother's bosom, give way to the first and only impulse. Nothing is more beautiful as one lies stretched on his boughs, waiting the coming of the sand man, than to watch the dancing moonlight sifting through the overhanging branches and falling with all kinds of fanciful patterns on the white roof. The occasional dropping of a pine needle or a last year's cone, or the steady stepping of some inquiring little animal who comes to marvel at your presumption as you drift away toward dreamland, but serves to accent your fine isolation and the restful silence of the night woods.

Poor sleepless men and women! You whose brains insist on recalling the problems and propositions of the day and summoning up all kinds of troubling things that madly arouse

you! You who in desperation eat and walk and count jumping sheep and do all kinds of hypnotic tricks to induce sleep, lie down here and press your heads into the pillows of these sweet boughs and let the magic illusions dancing on the ceiling and the soothing, mesmeric murmur in the tree tops subdue your wild, runaway brains and put you into the captivity you so anxiously and fruitlessly invite.

To the uninitiated the camp fire is a simply produced spectacle. So is a picture by Corot or by Whistler. Let rash inexperience attempt either, and bitter failure will bring confusion and a graver respect for the master of the secret. Beauty in either case does not depend on bulk. A little camp fire that has run its course and is falling to embers, is just as likely to bring an impressive and meditative silence to the camp company and start the imagination rioting as a large one. But the large, red, roaring camp fire that feeds on great logs and specially craves resinous knots, is the camp fire to produce those fine spectacular effects about which we read. It is a wild, lurid, acrobatic thing, that dances and sways and sweeps hot, angry tentacles in the air and crackles as though the fiery jaws of some demon within

were crushing the billets of wood. It is a quickly contagious thing, and soon fastens its red, high light on the fronts of men and trees and resolves the rest of the world into a black background. Its grand fierceness keeps us at the distance and begets a liveliness in camp conversation and conduct, but later, when it becomes subdued and gentle, and the broad-topped column of white smoke rises and spreads like a dome over some dimly lighted cathedral, men come nearer, and camp fellowship begins. It is then that acquaintances of a few hours become lifelong companions and men get deep into one another's lives. Thoughts and feelings take the place of words, and the cares that infest the day recede to the vanishing point in memory, permitting a delicious, re-creating calm to take possession of us.

No one has as yet estimated the camp fire at its full artistic, speculative, and philosophical value. The world is in everlasting debt to this primitive institution of the camp for what it has called from the depths of the resourceful wood-lover's heart. It wakens in him the subtlest reveries and the most beautiful and delicate fancies. It furnishes him with daring and direct analogies for illuminating truth and an

occasion for the keenest observations and most profound philosophical speculations. Every true woodsman sees life, its problems, its forces, its doctrines, its duties, its privileges, in right proportions, with sane, true perspective from the camp fire.

But construction must precede contemplation. In order that the philosopher or poet may sit down before this radiant thing and be wrought upon emotionally, some one must do hard and skillful work. The practical task of building a camp fire is a matter of some invention and much more common sense. This is an enterprise whose success depends wholly on how you start. Much haste makes sure waste. Rebuilding a camp fire that died in the early stages of combustion is a most disconsolate undertaking. Choose the lee side of the camp and thus save the eyes of your fellows from the biting smoke. The dry, feathery bark of the birch, which, having done its duty last year, still clings to the shaggy trunks, is as combustible as tinder, and a few handfuls overlaid with a dozen old cones and an armload of dead branches, will make the foundation for a superstructure whose scope and grandeur will be limited only by the materials on hand and

the enthusiasm of the builders. The end is worthy of much labor.

The fire suggests its chief camp use, viz., cooking. Camp cooking is unique. It has a sweetness and relish all its own. It has the fortunate advantage of coming forward to satisfy the appetite in its most urgent and uncritical moods. It has about it a kind of glamour that insures wholesomeness in any event. It is generally limited in two main directions, namely, through the ignorance and awkwardness of the cook and the small variety of its available culinary materials. The coming of canned meats and condensed milk has made camp existence less hazardous, but the suggestion of the artificial and the roar of the markets of the civilized world are so strong in these condensed and preserved things, that they mar the primitive quality of the meal and can be endured only in case of lone residence in the woods.

The cooking of trout on the stream is the *chef d'œuvre* of camp cookery. It is a delicate task whose reward is out of all proportion to the labor involved. The fire should be laid between two small, firm logs, so as to provide for the spider a solid resting place over the

embers. Let the trout be dressed full length, and in good quantity. If the law permits, choose the seven- and eight-inch fish, as they are sweeter and more easily treated in the spider. Let the fire fall to a bed of coals between the logs, and when common sense says the conditions are right, put over the spider. Lay in a few strips of bacon, with perhaps some added fat. Roll each trout in a generous quantity of coarse meal and when the fat is hot drop quickly into the spider. Turn them frequently at first, lest their freshness twist them into shapelessness in the hot fat. Give the coals a chance. Exercise thoroughness here, if anywhere. Let the crisp, brown incrustation be perfect. When the standard of crispness has been reached, remove and serve hot under the open sky in the forward shadows of the approaching twilight, and to the orchestral accompaniment of the roaring stream and rustling boughs. The result is something too good for the fastidious and surfeited epicure. It is ordained for worthier. It is for men who have all day long pushed their way through the cold, swift, stony stream, and worked hard and long with rod and fly, and fought with obstacles overhead and underneath, and

finally, through patience, good nature, and skill have won this precious reward—it is for such to sit down and take and taste the full sweetness of each pink and toothsome morsel. Never did the sweat of the brow win such bread for the eater. The sweetness and richness of such a meal, eaten in the hour of victory and amid the glories of the battlefield, must be shared in order to be known.

THE ADIRONDACK WOODS

"The patient pines! They watch the winter stars and sing
A hymn of welcome to the virgin spring."

MARGARET CHURCH.

CHAPTER VII

THE ADIRONDACK WOODS

EVERY man brings into this region of forest beauty and mountain solemnity the Adirondacks of his own predilections. He looks across the receding billows of the green ranges and down the long blue vistas of their peaks, through an atmosphere tremulous with the stirring life of legends cherished from boyhood. So it comes to pass that a man looking at this marvelous panorama of peak and range, forest and nestling lakes, through the transforming atmosphere of his own individuality, sees his own exclusive Adirondacks.

This is not a country to be talked about in the severe and accurate terms of statistician

or geologist or geography maker. There is something so intangible and elusive in its tremendous beauty that it is always a little beyond the best description. A tinge to the atmosphere or a shade to the cloud that hoods a peak in the sunset must be left out of the sketch. One who is walking the quiet, mossy trails of the perpetually green woods, or creeping down the slippery stones of a mountain stream, sees far more than he can recount.

The making of the Adirondacks was certainly a great occasion in artistic world-building. To begin with, there were exceptionally fine materials on hand and in boundless quantities, including a profusion of granite for the footings of these grand domes and arches and gateways. There was an ample ground plan, sweeping an area equal in size to the State of Connecticut, giving full play to the daring designs of the Architect. Lake George and Lake Champlain were laid down on the east for a great moat, into which the ceaseless mountain waters might be drained, and by which the supply for the Hudson River Valley might be regulated. The St. Lawrence was then hung like a capacious eaves trough on the lower edge of the northern watershed.

Mighty furrows were rolled up diagonally across the intervening field. They rose to central peaks and ranges five thousand feet high and dropped to gently rolling hillocks at the farther edges. Some one, looking at the lengthening perspectives on every side, fancifully said it is

> "An endless caravan which never passes by,
> Whose camel-backs seem laden with the sky."

Hundreds of deep, cool lakes were dropped in between the great ridges as reservoirs for spring water enough to quench the thirst of a whole world and make all the Sahara deserts Mohawk Valleys. Then, over the tops and down the sides and around the edges of everything, were set the tangled, sweet-smelling forests of perpetual verdure and richly varied woods. Then were introduced the moose and deer and foxes, with scores of other forest denizens whose feet were softened for noiseless walking down these shady aisles that lead to meadows and toothsome feeding. And when the hermit-thrush and ruby-crowned kinglet and all their mellifluous choir fellows took their places in the green loft and began their overture, one might well say that the Adirondacks,

from the shaggy finial of Mt. Marcy to the lowest foothill that underpinned the mighty structure, were finished, complete, and all very good!

Here is a country made and placed for the cultivated nomad. Here he abounds. He comes singly and alone, walking behind a compass, carrying his inn on his back and having no abiding place, nor wanting one. Or he comes in families with maids and nurses and all the wearisome paraphernalia of a high-strung modern life, and sets up a city home at some great mountain hotel. For the latter, apart from the fine air and a change in the type of recreation, the social treadmill of the winter time goes on as usual. To see a lusty five-year-old boy in starched piqué clothes, patent-leather shoes and a modish hat—all in the relentless grip of a dirt-hating nurse—thrust out into this region which invites to bare legs and feet and clothes as simple in form as they are meager in quantity, is indeed a pathetic picture.

Yet the cultivated nomad comes, fifty thousand strong. He comes up out of the dirt and clatter of the market place to lose his burdens of social and business life in this

sanctuary dedicated to the world's rest and recreation, and happy faces are everywhere.

In spite of the fact that many hotels announce on their circulars that "consumptives are not received," no such embargo can shut the gates of this hospitable country. The pale pilgrims are going to and fro in great numbers. They come in hopeful thousands, expecting to stay the progress of pulmonary diseases. These high hills of spruce and balsam in hundreds of cases bring back the old-time vigor. The refugee must not halt in his coming. He must fly in time, while the stealthy disease is in its incipiency; otherwise these tonic and healing influences will not save him.

I helped a young dentist on his last retreat —for the fight was over—out of the woods. His professional enthusiasm had detained him too long in the office and he reached this balsamic sanitarium too late. His presence was so hopelessly sad that one glance at his patient face on his mother's shoulder changed the countenance of a trainload of merry people. As we helped him from the mountain wagon to the steam launch on Blue Mountain Lake and finally to his stateroom in the Pullman car at the end of Raquette Lake, he was the

picture of a lost opportunity. He had appealed too late to these wholesome altitudes and after three months of fighting for breath, he was going home to die.

If one desired a beautiful place in which to die, a kind of ante-room of heaven so far as picturesqueness and scenic glory are concerned, he could wish for nothing better than the top of one of these rugged mountains. The clear sunshine, rarely broken, would dissipate the gloom, and the lacy texture of the clouds as they drape the mountain sides would make his folding shroud. Some notch that opens in the long, blue perspective would make fine resting place for the wilderness-lover, while the upreared face of one of a hundred peaks would perform grandly the office of tombstone to mark his resting place. It seems eminently fitting that the body of rugged old John Brown, of Ossawatomie, should find its long rest amid these wild, remote and severe beauties of nature, while "his soul goes marching on."

The old-time Adirondack guide is gone. Old age, prosperity, and, in too many cases, whisky, have brought his quaint, unique career to an end. A new type of guide is at

your service. He is a man of the new day. He belongs to a union. The Association of Adirondack Guides is an organization of these well-versed, genial pathfinders. The object of the association is to maintain both the quality of service and the rates of pay. No guide is eligible until after five years of residence in the mountains and three years of practice in the art of threading the forest maze.

But there are also vital requisites for the guide not published in the code. There must be a native love and knowing sense of the shy life around him, and there must be a genuine feeling for the beauty all about. He must be jealous of the forest and as ready to defend its treasures against greedy lumber vandals as he would his homestead against those who would pillage its hallowed bric-a-brac and tapestries. He must know how to cook by the woodsman's recipe the staple food stuffs of the camp, and in this wild country be able without fail to crown the menu with "Adirondack flapjacks." When this highly conversant man goes through the country from lake to lake he carries his boat, weighing about sixty pounds, poised on a shoulder yoke over his head. Thus overtopped

and striding through the forest, leading his party, he makes a picturesque feature in the landscape.

But these guides, and forests, and mountain paths, with all the other fascinating properties of his out of doors, make for the weary man a wholesome and profound distraction. To come in touch with such life is to live again in surprising vigor of muscle and mind. The difficulties seem less intricate and formidable, as one emerges from the reviving joys of these high, cool woods and turns for service towards the lower altitudes.

LOVE, LIBERTY AND SUNRISE

And the sea beyond.

CHAPTER VIII

LOVE, LIBERTY AND SUNRISE

THE sunset flooded the lake with strong lavender tints which heightened to pink when the red glow at the horizon deepened. As the twilight came on, shadows began to haunt the forest and stand close in about the roaring camp fire. Then began a period of fireside fellowship full of snuggling confidences. We lay close together with our bed alongside a log which the winter waves had washed clean and with the fire in our faces, while hitherto undiscovered areas of ourselves came to view. "Now, daddy, you talk, because I don't know any conversation," was the complimentary invitation. But it was followed at intervals by significant questions.

"Daddy, are all the Indians around here good people nowadays?"

"Yes, my boy."

A long, thoughtful silence. "Daddy, do snakes ever crawl on the ground at night?"

"No, not when it is as cold as it is to-night."

A satisfied sigh with another and longer period of thinking silence. "Daddy, are all animals afraid of blazing camp fires?"

"Yes, my boy, very much so."

And the seven-year-old woodsman, with fears his bravado could scarcely restrain, succumbed to the deep quiet of the woods, the soft murmur in the pine tops and the soothing languor of the dying fire, and fell asleep on his first bed of boughs. It was the realization of his long-deferred hopes, and at the end of a happy evening.

As we crept to our bed laid under a jib-sail cloth stretched between three bushes at the points of a triangle and sheltered from the cold west wind by a wall of cut branches, our fire settled to embers and left the quiet of the forest world undisturbed. The heart-broken cry of a bird that some owl in the cedar swamp had seized, shocked us for a moment. A distant whippoorwill called a few times within

our hearing and then retreated. A settler's starved dog sniffed at our hamper and, finding nothing, passed on. A faint echo of the night express eight miles away suggested distance rather than nearness. Then fell the silence as of woods primeval.

When at six next morning we sat up with the cold dews dripping from our crude tent cover, the little camper, joyous in the complete realization of a long-sought privilege, looked his companion squarely in the eyes and said, "Daddy, you said you would, and you did; all I've got to do is to wait an awful long time and you always do what you say."

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A minister has his ceremonial garments prescribed by custom. When in gown or frock coat, he is clad as people and story books would have him. This is perhaps as it ought to be, but let us confess to a great pleasure when we realized that at least 250 miles lay between us and our duty garments. Surely no one would have recognized any suggestion of clerical habiliments on the fisherman who came down midstream undertaking to lay trout flies on crystalline and musical waters as they ought to be laid. At the moment the

gayly-dressed kingfishers that eyed us from deadened limbs were our only company, and, as we approached them, they screamed and dropped to the waters, sweeping around the bend a few feet above the surface of the stream. Our roadway was in the clear, strong current running between high dense cedars and blue spruce, whose shapes suggested church spires. Bare dead boughs, like white ghostly arms with spreading fingers here and there, reached for leader and flies. Norways and white pines rose on the ridge that paralleled the stream; rank, bushy elders thickly walled the margin. The going over the smooth stones and unsuspected obstacles in the swift water was tedious and even at times a little dangerous.

Here was genuine freedom. All the usual bonds and ceremonies were left behind. There was no public speaking to be done. Neither the split infinitive, nor the singular subjects that precede very much removed plural verbs, nor the tenacious old provincialisms of boyhood, nor any of the grammatical guerrillas that ambush the extempore talker in the hour of his most satisfying fluency, had any terrors! Critics who arch their brows and smile pityingly when historical facts get

strangely awry without the speaker's knowledge, let alone his permission, when Cromwell insists on grabbing the throne in 1066 and Guido Reni will paint the Sistine Madonna whether or no; these, with boards that sit on dreams and crush them, and committees that insist that "the time is not ripe," and the fellow who says, "I want to be frank with you," and proceeds to gratify his warped sense of righteousness by clubbing you—all these are far away! Joy and peace are supreme in the heart for one day at any rate. The unusual clothes have something to do with insulating the currents of the ordinary living from the woodsman. In this I am supported by the general principles of "Sartor Resartus" and the gladly borne testimony of personal experience.

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To miss a sunrise in the summer woods is to see the day's pageant on its way after the act of crowning has passed. Of course, in the procession to be witnessed there remain things so beautiful that they charm and overawe; but the glory of the Kohinoor and the Cullinan that flooded the green aisles and lofty arches when, amidst the purple streamers and golden

insignia of her ministers of light, the day took her crown, has gone. Of course no matter from which side of the well-set stage the old wonder-worker enters—from east or west, at morning or evening—there is a program of magic, with the same trick patterns woven in green and gold. But the morning sun has large advantage. For one thing, there is music. If it be an early summer woods, overture after overture precedes the main performance. From dawn, at 3, till the yellow tide at its full shining falls across the tree tops an hour later, there is a singing that, for unaffected joyousness and throat-splitting abandon, the world's vocal artists do not know. Everybody is up and at it. There may be a few reserved and grouchy bird folk in the morning woods, but these sunrise chorals do not need them.

One need not be a bird specialist weighted down with a lot of technical bird lore in order to recognize these songsters and enjoy the personality of these morning music makers. You will surely see the black-billed cuckoo. He is not a star in the song world. He is a tuneless thing, but has a place in the ensemble. He is a slim, stiff, slate-colored fellow, slipping

in and out of the tangled undergrowth, wearing a dazed aspect when settled. His strange "caow, caow, caow," stands out from the chorus of the music makers with sharp individuality.

The harsh wailing that comes from a puffy gray bunch of feathers with a white spot shining at the crest is not devoid of music. If a noseless creature might be charged with nasal tones in his notes, we should say that the whisky jack or Canadian jay is guilty. But when one recalls the courage and fortitude of this bird, his rasping cries are positively attractive. The eggs of this furry-looking bird are laid and hatched and the children cared for in the month of March, when, in this North country, the temperature is often thirty degrees below zero.

One cannot spell the whistling notes of the veery. But he is here and in tune. His *vee-r-r-hu* is a lonely, unearthly call that recurs in short cycles, leaving a melancholy echo. Some one has wished for a different ending to his tiny phrase. But were there in it those notes of rest and joy that make the song of the wood thrush so welcome we should lose one of the odd piquant voices of the morning and one

that adds the tone of mystery and melancholy to the vast chorus.

The soft, very much restrained whistle of the cedar waxwing gathers meaning, if not musical quality, when one knows this charming bird. Thoreau loved him and spoke of his "beady note." The warbler and wren are of course at it, eating and singing. The kingfisher loves the kettle-drum effect, the loon, under the thin stratum of fog covering the lake, sounds the shrill notes of the oboe, the cock partridge drums in the distance, the flicker beats a tattoo on the dead shell of some hollow tree shaft, and weird voices that one cannot define—singular and varied as any music could be—rise to stand out against the deep gentle undertones in the tree tops and the soft musical wash of the lake.

The tricks of any conjurer would be glorified and dignified by such an introduction. And when, amid this music, the sunlight falls through the shifting interstices of branch and trunk, laying patterns of exquisite beauty on the black mold, one can command no words that will adequately serve in the task of description. The world is at her best royal self! Her beauty seems constantly escaping you—

yet ever reappearing—spreading a lure of light and shade through the forest reaches that one cannot resist.

It is the memory of these morning suns that men love to cherish and revive when the shadowy twilight of life's evenings begins to appear.

WILDERNESS MEN

CHAPTER IX

WILDERNESS MEN

TO enter fishing grounds in a fashion entirely consistent with the business in hand as well as with the prevailing mood of the fisherman, one should take to the waterways as soon as possible. To one who has been tossed about in the rough, impolite vehicles of civilization, and struggled with the jostling and dirt of trains that scream through the land, besmirching the air with their soot, the silent waterways of the forest are like some unreal, idyllic thing that fascinates one as soon as he touches it. It is a thronged but silent roadway. Life at full tide, deft, eager and zestful, plies its business there. Always on

errands of forage or war or love, it moves noiselessly through the crystalline channels of its activity.

Delight, whetted by long anticipation, became well-nigh irrepressible as we reached our destination and found our guides, brown, gaunt, sinewy and undemonstrative, at the train-side. These men of the stream do little in the way of diplomatic correspondence. Their written words are few. With a penmanship that is generally unreadable and a spelling that is in constant and open defiance of all the rigid laws of orthography, these men prefer to speak with you face to face. Theirs is not a world of reading and writing but of thinking and acting. A "Howd'y," or "Well, here ye air!" and the etiquette of these hearty woodsmen has discharged in full its current bills.

These porters of the forest had come to lead us into the glorious domain of which they were proud to be a part, and the task did not, according to their construction, call for the red tape of superficial courtesy. Henry was the crusty, close-fisted Yankee that always made the contracts, and the interests of his brethren were always safe under his shrewd-

ness and money wit. However, he knew the woods no better than did his fellows. Rube was large of heart, loyal to his fellows, and the father to a household of patriarchal proportions. Willie was young, gentle, docile, and dreamed much in the daytime. Archie was big-handed and florid-faced; a genuine son of the wilderness. The quartet, laying hold of our very promiscuous luggage with well-trained movements, and shouldering it, led us through sandy village streets, over sweet-smelling piles of sawdust and into the thick, green woods where the river swept by with a strong, wide current.

The afternoon shadows were gathering as the flat-bottomed boats, built for safety and not for grace, received their load of camp equipment and personal baggage, and, breaking away, moved quietly down as promising a stretch of trout water as one could ask. The exhilaration of the new, free life was upon us; a sense of its untrammeled liberty took possession of every man, and the mesmerism of the situation was too obvious and delicious not to be recognized by all. A wild boyishness made it impossible to restrain a long, loud, lung-testing shout as we shot down the over-

hung stream and around swift-going bends. No power is more even and smooth, more rhythmical, more suggestive of great reservoirs of unused potency hidden somewhere in remote regions of high hills, than that which drives great forest streams to their levels. Around long, graceful turns swept the separated company, one by one, led on by the long, deep-dipping paddle of Henry. The glad, tired men of the real working world, sitting forward of the middle rib of their crafts, were at ease, charmed by the magic of the woods and not yet caring to think of what these cool, buoyant waters sheltered. The rude fleet was on historic grounds. In a not very remote past, other processions of wood-lovers had gone down the stream. Wild men in paint and thirsting for blood here went in convoys of birch bark to meet their foe on the near-by shores of Lake Huron; a century of hunters, stealthy past masters of the art, had gone here luring the fawn to the fatal shore line with their cruel jacklight; money kings, with great schemes for turning pine trees into gold, had gone foraging down the stream and left desolation behind them while filling their pockets with fortunes. A fine old highway!

The chieftains of the woods tribes and the old lumber kings have gone forever! The farmer will doubtless never come. The lover of solitude is in undisturbed possession. Inhaling the calm and tonic air of these great altitudes, soothed by the swish under the flat prow and the cool winds rushing out of the deep hills, the weary pilgrims out of the city of work feel themselves rising into the dreamland of rest that danced before their eyes through all the long, hard months of winter.

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Waiting for the long-deferred day of release from the grind and the scheduled hour of departure to the trout stream, is trying to the soul even of a self-restrained man. He loses all persistency of program, and incoherency in speech and plans spoils all sequence. Various functions of his intellect are interrupted and he is humiliated when he realizes the variety and freakishness of his excursive vagaries, and when he finds himself wrapped in moods that are very delicious but far from appropriate for one on the payroll of another. The sunshine of a premature spring day starts the sap in the birch trunk and the eager woods enthusiasm in a man's heart.

Before the beauties of the forest have arrived the old longing has come. The longing is as perennial as the season itself, and a sweet, softening thing in the life of the race. All men feel it. Happy the man that can find at an early moment some silent place in the wilderness where he may feed his hungry heart.

After a vigorous, unbroken run of twenty-five miles with the clean current, the twinkling lights of the cabins of the guides were indeed welcome, for the cool, quick twilight had fallen upon us as out of some celestial ambushment. We entered the cabin homes of men accustomed to fight the odds of life with weapons few and plain, yet who with that crude simplicity of equipment are as happy as those who live amid the complex domestic machinery of mansions. The hillsides supplied the long, straight Norways for the cabin walls, and, as a last resort, civilization was appealed to for shingles for the roof. A suggestion of a piazza would be resented as hinting that they were afraid of the sun and rain. Two or three sections of small, clay sewer pipe serve as a chimney. That the need was effectively met one presently saw, for a white plume rolled into the air from the tiny top, hinting of what

was yet to be. There were no barns to clutter up the landscape, for the river displaced the horse as a family necessity. A little shelter as a compliment to the cow stood near, but she despised it and lived on the hillside, where now she ate in lonely silence broken only by the tinkling of her bell. All life was a glad, serene stagnation with its monotony unbroken by the great world problems of which it never heard. The spur of ambition never stung its men. The call of duty to the world outside never touched them. They were happy to move on the low, quiet levels of an obscure, humdrum existence, asking no odds of the outside world save that in the open season they might get in touch with the hearts and the pocketbooks of out-of-door devotees.

Inside the cabins the mother was the factor. The meager array of utensils with which she met the duties of the office to which an inscrutable Providence had called her was pathetic. Few women could have met the test and been content to run the home with an outfit so pitiable. For this gentle soul in the exclusion of the woods things had never been otherwise, and one pan or pot cooked all she had to prepare, if she gave each thing its turn.

A mother in the wilderness either rises to a level very much above that of an ordinary woman, or falls very far below it. Out from that meagerly equipped kitchen in a surprisingly short time came a meal that was surprisingly good. With the call of keen, strong, health-giving appetites, we gathered about the little table, in the middle of a bare floor. Things had the touch and flavor of pioneer cooking. Something of the sweetness and freshness of the wild woods in which this intuitive cook lived had crept into the simple articles spread on that supper table. It may have been the aroma of the pines on the high plains about, or the ozone of the tonic air mixed with every viand, or it may have been the joy of eating in the solitude, after a long, hard day's ride; but something had gone into that food to give it a toothsomeness and a relish that food rarely possesses.

About the cabins and along the winding length of the stream hurrying by, was an ever-changing panorama of tree and shrub with enchantment for a man who saw with understanding eyes what he saw. Great lanes of hardwood and luxuriant undergrowth alternated with lowlands of rank grasses. Wild

vines here and there worked a fine green tracery in the low-lying boughs, and hung like leafy tapestries at the stream side. On steep, sandy hillside the wintergreen berries lay in such rich profusion as to tinge the verdure with a brilliant scarlet. The June berry, outrivaling all the rest in the wealth of its early bloom, stood here and there like some haycock covered with untimely snow. The quivering birch and shining, green-leafed scrub oak were abundant. Here and there, struggling relics of the grand old conifers stood stolid and defiant in their loneliness, as though asserting their native rights to the soil from which they have been dragged forever, leaving no progeny to take their place. And over grass and shrub and tree there fell such an untarnished beauty as only the wilderness woods, washed by the rains and swept by the winds, could produce. To live amidst all this softens the natures of these forest dwellers. The reason that men grow bitter against the world and denounce it as cold and harsh is because they do not see how generous and even prodigal she is to her humble children who trust her.

An eight-inch law and a vast supply of

hungry, striking underlings aggravated our labors, but made us appreciate the lawful fish all the more. Leaving the cabin, we set our camp the next night on a lofty, well-ventilated level at a bend of the river where inviting vistas stretched both ways. We left it in the sunshine of the early morning, and came back to it with aching wrists and tired backs and creels moderately weighted as the sun dropped to the horizon. Rain came on, it is true, and much foreboding in the skies kept us expectant. But a day of rain is no burden to a seasoned fisherman. It means a few precautions about the bread and the extra underclothing, but no real discomfort. The camp fire loses its vim and becomes a sullen, fitful, smoky thing for a while, but if the nest log is firm and well underfired, a day of rain will work no permanent damage.

The camp in the wilderness is a fine viewpoint for observing the doings of the feathered folk. These poor, hunted, imperiled birds that never know when the season is opened or closed, but who fight for their lives summer and winter, deserve the pity of all tenderhearted men. One may leisurely study with the camp glass the movements of these

fearless and friendly birds of the deep, green woods, for they pose to favor him in his researches and seem to have a faculty for enjoying a personal interview with real friends.

Through such free friendship one comes to intimate terms with nature. Things in her appear and speak that heretofore have been hidden and silent, and one turns from the company of the everlasting quiet toward the stress and clamor of the world with new strength. The touch with the forest world breathes new power into the spirit which the honest man longs to share with the world. And as in the dusk the village wagon rolls softly homeward through the sand, the distant roar of the approaching train, carrying men back to their burdens, echoes through the serene wood depths, and brings a thrill to the revived heart of the man who knows that with new zest he is ready to enter again the battle of life that strong men must wage.

OUT OF DOORS

"Round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

CHAPTER X

OUT OF DOORS

MEN who have grown stiff and dignified through prolonged aloofness from the informal and recreating life of the out of doors are subject to a very quick regeneration when they once give the recreating conditions a chance. It is as interesting as it is amusing to watch the process. Some men have been driven to the woods by the violent persuasion of their wilderness friends. They make one think of captive kings being taken bound and blinded into their own hitherto unknown regal realms, where they are to find a freedom of which they never dreamed. These unwilling forest lovers make their approaches toward a sympathetic attitude

very cautiously and apologetically. They are silent and reserved. It is puerile to glow about such childish things, and they will in no wise encourage the small talk born of the narrow out-of-the-world life into which they have been brought so reluctantly. But we must be patient. They are fighting against prejudices, and the process of recalling forgotten race memories is slow. Be assured that the contagion is at work, and the spirit of the woods moves in ways as subtle as magic and is not to be resisted finally. An evening in the camp will convert the halting, doubting pervert.

The white roofs of the tents sitting low in the deep green shadows of the twilight woods, showing their open doors to the watery thoroughfare, make a surprisingly beautiful impression upon the prisoner as he swings around the bend of the stream below which the guides have settled for the night. The camp fire throws up a smoky plume that waves for a moment and then casts its fine, pungent odors out into the slow-going atmosphere, and disappears as a thing never to be lost. The hungry prisoner, still silent, but with his face full of relaxing lines, notes the spider on the open fire, and the steaming pails that hang

from the protruding sticks caught in the forks of perpendicular stakes while their farther ends are slightly buried in the turf, and cannot refrain from favorable comment on the satisfying aspect of things after the day's work. The bacon makes fine company for the pink-meated trout in the spider. The steaming pail holds over the glowing coals potatoes grown in the sandy soil of the North country. None of their goodness is sacrificed by allowing the iron-impregnated skins to be removed. From another pail comes the aroma of steeping coffee. The old-time prejudices of the conservative captive are on the verge of retreat before something that suggests enthusiasm. When the twilight has somewhat deepened and the glad-hearted men have gathered from the day's toil in the cold water, the call to supper is promptly answered. As the potato breaks like a fluffy snowdrift across the prisoner's tin plate, and urgent hands lay two crisp, brown trout alongside, and set steaming at his right a cup of amber nectar from the fragrant pail overhanging the subdued embers, the erstwhile protestant is at last silenced forever, and there is born a broad, catholic lover of the woods who never

again will jibe his wilderness-loving friends on their weakness.

The overarching skies whose stars the near-by camp fire eclipses for the moment, the trumpeting winds going in the trees and the night birds speaking on the hills, together with the soft, dull rushing of the stream now hidden in the gloom, make an irresistible combination of enchantment. The man who thought love for the out-of-doors a boyish trait in any man, moves the previous question and forever closes the debate. Nature has restored the prodigal, and ever after he will walk in closer, more intelligent and delightful fellowship with her.

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It is too bad that the conventional things of commerce and our usual mode of living estrange men from this healthful life of the woods; but such is the case. It is too bad that men have to be "trained" in the art and practice of out-of-door living when the best era of the race's physical life was that of an exclusively open-air existence. We are slow to understand that the air and sunshine are God's specially compounded prescription for the ills of the physical life. Here the Great

Physician hides away gentle restoratives, pleasant tonics and the fine alteratives, to await our use. In this grand pharmacopœia he has provided antiseptics that cleanse and defend, stimulants that make call on the nerves and sedatives that soothe. If men thought less of the violent drugs that make local attacks on sensitive organs that mutiny because ill treated, and more of God's air and sunshine on the hills and in the forests, the world's health would be vastly improved.

It does not require much technical learning to understand the working relation between the sun and ozone of these bracing altitudes and the corpuscles of the blood. Red corpuscles, touched and filled with health, go traveling through their appointed passages, like ordained missionaries with a circuit of fine influence. They pile up in the currents and jam the side walls of the veins and arteries. They move, like the commissary wagons of a general, through the lungs and tissue cells to the farthest outposts of the life zone, with the fine remedial tonics and curatives that God throws into them out of the air and sunshine.

And it is just as evident that the white

corpuscle gets a most prompt and effective reaction from out-of-door living. The divine order in the matter of sun and air and human health is again apparent. This mysterious little white picket ranges the life channels, scouting for enemies. He has a discipline that is routine itself and a code of movements as mysterious as they are skilled and beneficent. Let some treacherous germ attempt to break through the lines with his detachment of destroyers, and the White Guards that stand in ranks of five thousand to ten thousand in a minute drop of blood, will rally from hitherto undiscovered ambushment until the microscope will show that same minute blood-drop garrison swarming with perhaps one hundred thousand loyal defenders of the realm now in peril. They fall upon the enemy pell-mell, be it zymotic germ or some bruised and congested center in the muscular tissue. They embank themselves to stop the advance of the intruder. They undermine with health by boring through the infected tissue with their infinitesimal but healing bodies. They eat up and honeycomb the hostile intruder, and give themselves to the most gallant and daring service of defense that could be asked

of any soldiery. The warm sunshine, like the nurse's hot applications, sets free these noble wide-ranging scouts, and the good oxygen filtering through the lung cells gives tone and vigor to the blood currents in which the scouting detachments move against marauders.

Men should be more intelligent concerning the healing air and more appreciative of the sun and the saving influence of vigorous and prolonged physical exercise in the wilderness. If this were the case, the expensive and luxuriously appointed health hotels, with their regimen of fads and mechanical devices for escaping perspiration, would not be full of people while the woods are empty, and men would turn in increasing thousands to the sanitarium of the wind-swept hills and the recreating atmosphere of the woods. They would get the ozone distilled in the free, roaming winds that disinfect the world, and not that which is made in meager quantities by some complex machinery of man in a room fourteen by fourteen. Away from the atmosphere of medicine and the surveillance of the doctors, these agents have supreme place in making men well. To get well and stay well men must stand in the open landscape of the

world, where the fumes and poisoned distillations of factory smoke shafts are impossible, and where they may watch the clear, white clouds pile up against a clean, blue sky, like signal banners set to call men into loftier, cleaner, healthier altitudes. The high winds gather in their arms the soiled elements of the low-lying air and clear them of all impurities, and men, breathing deeply and long of this healing sweetness, find they have lost that lassitude and ennui that they mistook for sickness.

The complexion of a trout stream is so variable as to provide an observing fisherman with a source of constant delight. Its face differs on different days. To-day it wears a strange, unbeautiful metal sheen that wearies the eye and compels a comical squint. To-morrow it is something so transparent and crystalline that all surface lines are wiped out, and the stones and plant life and darting forms beneath are brought into surprising conspicuity. Such a complexion is the fisherman's foil, if he be on oft-whipped waters. A pale blue lies upon the stream in its quiet nooks and unruffled passages through open fields, that is none other than the color of the

sea. Among the shadows of the alders the waters are dark and suggestive to the well-versed, while here and there the fringe of verdure is so dominating a thing that the face of the stream reflects nothing but the living green overhead. In the twilight a silver whiteness settles down upon the waters, and something truly spectral and ghostly hovers over the stream as it glides from its quiet meandering through the meadows into the deep gloom of the woods. There will be a golden luster at sunset if there be width of stream and a free sky view. There are amber colors suggesting a decoction of pine roots and hemlock bark brewed by elves deep in the woods and rectified in the sunlight of treeless openings. All the colors that can be mixed on the painter's palette lie on the face of the waters as the days come and go, and the joys of the fisherman's life are greatly enriched if with honest enthusiasm he can give himself to observing these things.

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This love of out-of-doors has larger connections than some matter-of-fact men are willing to concede. It has a reflex influence that makes for goodness, and, like all virtues,

is prophetic of better things for the soul by and by. Izaak Walton says truly, "He that feels not the beauty and blessedness and peace of the woods and meadows that God hath bedecked with flowers for him while he is yet a sinner, how shall he learn to enjoy the unfading bloom of the celestial country if he ever become a saint?" There is an inference here not difficult to draw. There is serious doubt in the mind of the old wilderness apostle as to whether the man that willfully estranges himself from the best and most beautiful in God's world, the mountains and forests and sea, will ever be a saint. The odds are against the man who finds his only joys in the artificial things of a highly wrought civilization with its noise and clatter, and despises the solitude and solemn stillness of the woods. If he ever becomes an acclimated saint in the celestial country, it will be all of grace and none of merit.

Coarse and vulgar men love the woods with a kind of brutal passion. It is cover for the wild life they are eager to kill, and too often the pitying shade hides from the world their profane riotings for which the very silence and purity of the woods give opportunity. These

sodden souls are so earthy that the divine presence in the earth is not seen. They seek a surfeit of low, physical joys that soon pass and bequeath to them bitterness and weariness. But to men who draw near to her with clean hearts and pure minds the wilderness world willingly confides rich, inspiring secrets.

THE STREAM

"The streams are full of oracles
And momentary whisperings,
* * * *
With wordless speech that sings and sings
The message of diviner things."

MADISON CAWEIN.

CHAPTER XI

THE STREAM

STREAM is a generic term. Like the mention of any genus, the word suggests scores of species. It plays the conjurer with a man's memory. Its first pronunciation calls out of the past the englamoured swimming-hole of boyhood, where the little, insignificant stream that came haltingly through the green woodland pastures well-nigh stopped and fell asleep on a bed of soft, cool mud. This is a memory worth cherishing. The unspeakable pool of half-stagnant drainage waters from the flat farm lands lies in memory as pellucid as dew. What riotings took place on its green, sloping banks in the happy nakedness of youth!

How invariably we reached the spot on the sloping bank, worn bare by the feet of diving companions, with our clothes in our hands, having disrobed as we ran! The little hickory shirt with its tight, stubborn buttonholes always tried our patience beyond endurance and tears flowed while we ran, but the cotton trousers slipped automatically from the scrawny legs, brown with the sun and blue with the bruises of adventurous boyhood. Casting the tiny bundle of clothing toward a friendly bush, with a yell of unalloyed glee we plunged headfirst into those chocolate waters, rising triumphantly with a handful of mud to prove the quality and quantity of the diving. Here was the natatorium of generations of neighborhood boys. The Hellespont never gave more thrilling joy to its swimmers. There was not always peace at the streamside. There were, sad to be told, mad mud battles of little, naked savages on the slippery margin. They hurled bombs of bursting, spattering clay at one another, and the battle often issued in tears and angry altercations; but before the wet bodies had dried—innocent of towels—under the sticky clothes, and the blood had come again into the blue lips, all

was love and good fellowship. Such a stream is only beautiful to a man as it lies in his memory, and to a boy in the era of heedless fun.

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Then there is the stream of reality, living and being loved by no reason of sentiment and glamour but through its own intrinsic worth. It is the stream of quality. A clear, sweet, singing stream born in the hidden bowers of the mountain side, where eager, subterranean waters first find the sunlight. Nobly sprung from a good birthplace! Clean winds sweep the threshold through which the stream passes to its destiny, while cool, drenching rains continually flush the floor over which it starts. Dropping through deep pockets of sand, it is filtered of all taint, and issues clear and radiant as air. At what point this little beginning becomes a fine, swift, roaring thing that breaks against you as you wade waist-deep fighting for footing, we do not know. It is a product mysteriously wrought in the darkened laboratories of the wood. Reinforcements have appeared. More vigor and volume have come, demanding more width and depth. It now breaks over rough bowlders

in the middle of its path, gurgling and growling in fierce protest against their hindrance to its increasing movements. It finds a wider but rougher berth as it falls into a bed where glacial souvenirs lie thick. Upon these it dashes into foam and becomes the place of the joyous inebriation of the trout, while deafening you with the noise of its rampant running. Then it goes into a smooth, quiet passage as it leaves the romping ground of the yearling spawn. It runs deep and still under the overhanging tree tops and thick, marginal verdure. It seems a kind of sacrilege to break the still, smooth surface, shining like emerald and reflecting the canopied decorations. Here is where the big fish lie. The prow must move like a moccasin-muffled foot in the trail behind a deer. A far-reaching cast only will avail to find the wary company at home. But when they are at home and your call meets a response, there is fun galore! Depend upon it, it is a good, gamy trout that takes your dropper in this quiet vestibule between the noisy waters, and before you bring him to your net he will put you and your willowy rod tips to the test.

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In the big hump of Lake Superior that rises high towards Hudson Bay near Port Arthur, there is a stream falling into Thunder Bay that combines all the romantic, picturesque and practical beauties of an ideal trout stream. It has the long continuing snows of the Canadian wilderness and the innumerable lakes of that great north country as its source of supply. It comes through a tenantless land from source to mouth. The fall is sharp, making the velocity of the shallow waters great. There is at places a width of three hundred feet where the rough granite bottoms shine through the clear waters, jagged and steel gray, like a shoal of pickerel. There are bare outcroppings of stone separated by deep crevices that run with the maddest of waters. Deep, gurgling potholes catch and throw the furious spray perpendicular. Long, smooth toboggan slides end against a sheer wall of granite, where you may guess there is a beautiful aquatic display. At the ordinary stages of summer water there are stepping-stones for safe walking in and around those hurrying waters. You can pass over those smooth bowlder crowns athwart sluiceways whose wasted energy would run a mill, and wade to some projecting shelf

overhanging a maelstrom. To cast from this point with a leader full of any ordinary flies, is to take in due time a deeply mottled, rosy-meated trout, weighing about two pounds. You respect the dignity and power of such a noble stream.

There is another stream along the north shore of Lake Superior that is wholly void of reputation save among local fishermen. It plunges through the three miles of its entire length with the vicious wildness of a small Niagara. It sees but few feet of smooth, easy-going existence between the little lake out of which it falls and Lake Superior three hundred feet below. It lies wholly inaccessible among the rugged hills of the wild shore, save from the water. A friendly tug towing a mud scow to Pigeon River took us and our outfit within comfortable paddling distance of the stream's mouth, where, with our birch-bark canoe, we found lightering an easy task. As one passes westward out of the harbor of Thunder Bay, leaving the sleeping giant light a score of miles to port, he breaks through island gateways that suggest the Pillars of Hercules. Monster pyramids, truncated cones, ridged parallelograms and other insular novelties stand out

of the water about you, lifting here and there most exquisite verdure, all lying against the background of Mt. McKay and the adjoining palisades, twelve hundred feet high.

Landing the camp outfit of tents and provisions for four men and an Indian guide, we sat down to eat our lunch on the agate-strewn beach at the mouth of the stream whose secrets we would know. It had a beguiling face, which wore no hint of the violence of its upper waters. It moved quietly but strongly and at an angle into the lake. When later we saw how the waters had been aërated by dropping over a dozen falls and by being tossed through their own fury into the overhanging boughs, and beaten into purified foam against the rocks and limestone slabs with which their whole tortuous way was filled, we no longer wondered at their sweetness and silvery whiteness as they moved out of the green ravine and were lost in Lake Superior.

Camp packs were apportioned to each man according to the strength of back and the willingness of disposition. There was stiff but glorious climbing toward the plateau above us where the wild waters broke loose. We pitched camp at the outlet through which the

river came roaring from Lake Lomond. Its music was a fine, deep chord to which the breezes blowing in the birches made a treble part. It was a river full grown at birth. It had no rivulet childhood, no brook beginnings.

A hundred yards below the outlet the windstorms had thrown dead jack pines across the stream in chaotic confusion. Under that débris the dark waters gurgled suggestively. Here was a cover for something native and evidently worth while. It was a foil that one feared to go against, but which one who knows the subtle irresistibility of such a hole could not pass by, cost what it might in lost and broken tackle. Clambering to an opening in the dead timbers that crisscrossed the stream, and dangling a fly in a small triangle made by the fallen trees, something interesting promptly followed. It was the right place, the right lure, the right moment! The immediate and unexpected attack was startling. It was so breath-taking and violent that equilibrium on the uneasy aerie was scarcely restored before something happened. One thinking he is in possession of something and finding that he is the thing possessed, fights hard to prevent panic. Playing to a wearisome finish this big,

gamy, but unfortunate fellow was impossible. No radius was to be had in which to permit a rush in order to reel him back, mouth open, to his end. The débris had been the continual undoing of others. It was a situation calculated to try the nerve of any fisherman. No chances must be recklessly taken, no second must be lost by conservatism or theorizing. A taut line cutting narrow circles, a swaying, wriggling rod, and ere long, an aching wrist, advised that one was at close range with very exciting possibilities. There was no opportunity for the tricks of skill. The want of expert knowledge was here no barrier to success. The issue rested with chance and brute force, and these, aided by tenacity and good tackle, won the day. Without the net, unfortunately left behind, and in less than ten minutes, the enemy, intrenched behind every possible advantage, was finally taken and laid his full, shining length on a bed of sweet fern to be weighed. He was beyond any creel, for such a noble specimen of the noblest species, when breaking the beam at five pounds, is not to be hidden away in a basket even for a moment.

There were other and lesser victories. These waters breed and build a fighting trout.

The incessant leaping and climbing brings physical perfection, while the air-charged waters give tone and sportiveness to the spirits of the fish fortunate enough to find his home herein. Down those roaring waters that were soon to lose themselves in the majesty of the vast inland sea, a sacrifice of the individual for the betterment of the greater unit, we slowly worked our way. We took from this foaming whirlpool and that mad eddy, or from the undertow of those falls, ample reward for our labors. The joyous satisfaction in the scenes and sounds, the whole emotional appeal of the situation was enough, apart from any trophies of the stream.

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When streams come to great width and volume and are taken possession of by commerce even in a small way, they are dropped from the catalogue of the forest-lover. They are big, common, characterless. We find in them no place for the imagination. They are what they seem—wide, patent, utilitarian thoroughfares of trade. The little stream with its gentle and artistic accompaniments is a kind of microscopic masterpiece that while inviting our closest scrutiny, defies it. It

presents us an alluring invitation to fellowship, all the while beguiling us with a beauty that is born of mystery and silence. The nerves of a tired man whose resistance has collapsed, and to whom the very thought of pushing his way through the crowds of the market street another hour is a burden, will find more recreating rest in a little, vivacious stream that lures him with rod and creel down its noisy and shaded length, than in any of the ordinary diversions sought by the weary.

Men plead ignorance of the art of fishing as an excuse for not seeking the restful companionship of the trout stream. This point is not well taken. This is overemphasizing a single detail to the depreciation of the whole picture. The joy is not in the fishing, though that enhances it, but in all the peculiar, interesting and inspirational conditions of life and labor called out by the seductive art. Wilderness-lovers never measure the day's joy against the weight of the creel. It is something independent of it, though not apart from it. This is the attitude of mind upon which recreation on the stream insists, before bequeathing its best blessings.

DOWN THE STREAM

CHAPTER XII

DOWN THE STREAM

DOWN the stream, I say. Direction has much to do with the casual woodsman's appreciation of the romance and poetry of the situation. "Down" makes the going a dream, for one glides through the old Arcadies and wooded Elysiums with every sensibility charmed to the point of mesmerism. "Up" makes the dream a nightmare. Perspiration and muscle fag spoil the vision, for one fights for every inch he takes and is so continuously busy with his wayward prow that chance green vistas, songful boughs and interesting water life make but a slight impression.

The stream now in mind was a genuine

child of the wilderness. It ran through only twenty-five woodsman's miles, and knew nothing of human habitation save where now and then a wood-lover set his tent and built a fire. It served as the outlet for one of the deep, sweet, spring-fed lakes of the old pine country that lay on the sandy plateau of the north. The stream, after making a swift start of a mile, suddenly fell into acres of wild rice, sedge and celery, growing out of the bottomless beds of marl. Here in this swampy jungle garden, the mallards and teal, with other less interesting members of the duck family, bred in the summer and fed in the fall.

Untangling itself with difficulty, the stream broke through a thicket of tamarack and cedar and at once indicated that it had very definite business on hand. The gloomy acres of the cedar swamp through which it went, cold and white, was ideal summer cover for bear. The berries and the shade and the nearly impenetrable seclusion secured for him every characteristic of an ideal summer resort.

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The strong current laid the rank, clean, water weeds flat and parallel in the limpid

and refracting flow, and swept the fine white sand into long parabolic ridges at the bends. To mind the nose of the canoe and to keep the stern from fouling on jutting roots and branches at the swift, noisy bends of the crooked channel was not an altogether workless dream after all. My partner, as skilled a craftsman as ever sent a canoe slapping its way over a windy width of water, or stole a silent mile to get in range of a brace of ducks, took most of the work, for I had the prow.

Never was there sweeter, whiter water in a wilderness stream. The old pigments of pine refuse that once colored the stream with amber tints had forever faded. The water shone and sparkled as though distilled. Through it one saw as through the air, with this interesting difference—that he saw everything under a microscopic enlargement. As one dipped his paddle and thrust the blade from him through a fine, resisting current, he seemed as one who was working in molten glass in which had been run the silver and gray of the clouds, with undertones of marl green, and on which lay a shimmering iridescence of which no art-glass worker knows the formula.

And when one has held hard on his way and passed through the twisting, squirming waters of a hundred bends, the beads stand on his forehead as of a man that works. And when he takes his rubber cup and fills it at the canoe side and drains it slowly and does it again and again—he then knows that he is actually afloat on the snow crystals of the winter hills, run together under the June sun. Aërated and cleansed by July storms, these snow-made waters pour across the floor of this wilderness on their way toward the great water riot at Niagara Falls, and ultimately the green foam at the nose of ocean liners.

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Speaking of bears—we have come to think of them as literary characters who dance and waddle in men's clothes through the pages of children's books. We even have lifted them to the level of Shaksperian characters who soliloquize on life's troubles as dramatically as did Hamlet and possess the cunning of a dozen Shylocks. There is no special objection to a bear's philosophizing and deducing conclusions. There is no denizen of the woods that makes a more quaint and interesting stage appearance as he rehearses in childish

English his emotions or exploits, or—at proper moments from the stage's point of view—the pent-up passions of his Bruin heart. The bear has gained the affectionate interest of our children and when the tragedy of the trap rings the curtain down, we weep together over the loss of a virtually human friend. But perhaps the bear-makers of the book world do not know the bears of this cedar wilderness, of which a persistent old hunter killed thirteen last winter. They may credit them with too much psychology and humanize them to an unlawful degree. But hear this:

A settler back from the stream, having taken desperate chances with the untamed country, was trying to subdue it and make it fruitful. The moonless nights of the spring woods were dark, still, and very fit for foraging. Shortly before dawn, our settler heard plaintive cries and much noisy struggling in the neighborhood of the log shelter where a small calf was kept. His lantern light told a startling story. The calf was gone and the floor of the pen was as slippery and red as the shambles. The little animal had been deftly disemboweled that its weight might thereby be reduced, lifted over the low stockade and

carried into the woods by some resident bear.

The reasoning of the bear was plain and, from his point of view, his conduct was wholly justifiable. Cruelty was not his motive. It was simply the satisfaction of a hunger for which he was not responsible and the nourishing of the family of young cubs now on a meat diet. The undesirable parts of the veal that a kind Providence put in his way must be left behind, that his awkward shoulders might have less burden as he fled the unjustifiable anger of the farmer. So he slaughtered and dressed and wrapped in its own skin, according to the butcher's mode, this defenseless animal, and dragged it into the hiding of the great, deep swamp beyond. This interest in the tragedy lay in the animal instincts of the bear as he circumvented the difficulties in his approach to food, and to introduce any more psychology would be to denature the whole scene and make it an inappropriate as well as an impossible picture of human passions and planning in a bear.

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Did you ever stop before the dining-room door of a mink while passing down the stream? You may feel free to do so. It is never an

intrusion. The domestic work is always-done and the family generally out. As we swept around a bend, we found that the smooth edge of the swift stream had cut a cool grotto beneath the outer bank, over which hung the stiff green boughs of an odorous cedar. On the clay floor above the water line we saw in neat order the attractive refuse of the breakfast table. With a wholesome interest in the minute details of nature's business, we passed a long back stroke athwart the stern of the canoe and threw her point into the mink's doorway and fell to asking questions.

A dining room? Yes, in fact and fancy as well. The sideboard was inlaid with varying shades of sand and set with clean-washed pebbles, while the carvings were in the pattern of clawed feet without number. Napery? Yes, in regal abundance. Nothing left to be desired. Long, narrow ribbons of pale green water grasses, woven into fine, loose fabric by the loomlike beating of the water, were hanging everywhere. Above, sweet fern and alder boughs; below, lily pads and fibrous tree roots yellow as gold; behind, a dado of tapestry, as green as emerald and soft as velvet. Dishes? Certainly. There they lay before our

eyes—Dresden outdone. Her potteries never achieved such tints of pearl and gray and amethyst. Her potters never shaped and fired such transparent and delicate china as we saw in those dozen clean clam shells from which breakfast had just been served. Who knows the price of those clams in the terms of that mother mink's life? Hard work to begin with, peril from pirate fellows who swim the stream on buccaneering business, and a degree of skill for which the little water animal gets small credit. Our swift-gliding canoe was not too sudden to find everything in housewifely order about the place.

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From good cover we watched a mother eagle on her nest in the cheerless forks of a dead pine, and we then and there thought of the gentle and domestic side of the eagle. The savage and imperial character of the bird has obsessed us. We do not associate the eagle with any large degree of domestic enthusiasm. Herein he is misjudged. True, he is a lonely, individualistic pilgrim and loves war, and revels in the power of beak and talon. But he is, for all that, chivalry itself! He chooses his mate early, and through all of the vicissitudes of his

fighting, marauding life in field and forest he abides true to that choice. The home built by the twain is as comfortless and inartistic a bunch of twigs and sticks as could possibly be expected to serve the purpose of brooding. However, it hangs by some good principles of eagle architecture to its exposed and lofty foundations, and weathers the fiercest winds of summer and winter.

This nest looked to me, as we stealthily nosed the canoe through a fortunately located bed of swamp weeds, no better than the crude work of the muskrats that gather great inverted domes of weeds and sticks under which to keep alive the unity and sweetness of their domestic life during the winter time. But bigness, crudeness, ugliness, discomfort, all combined, do not break the charm of this special nest for its inhabitants; year after year, this home at which we looked has known the pains and joys of brooding, feeding, training and launching into the harsh life of the wilderness a family of young eagles. There was something pathetic about the aspect of the lonely and faithful mother as she sat so alert and watchful, anticipating cruelty at the hands of some enemy. She is one of a declining

family whose power and nobility have added a touch of unsubdued wildness to these wasting forests, and when the rapacious hunter has killed the last mother and left her fledglings to starve in the tree top, as he seems bent on doing, we shall lose from our Northern woods life its most majestic bird.

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In the surprises of its continual winding the stream provides a never-ending charm. There was at no time a straight-away course. It was ceaseless work to hold the craft in the wavering channel and to make the turns successfully. In five hours of paddling we saw not one dull moment, nor was there a suggestion of monotony in the kaleidoscopic scenery slipping by us so quietly.

We had no purpose as to fishing. One should disavow such intentions now and then, having eyes only for the beauties of the woods. Of course, there were a few nonchalant bass that crossed our bow and moved to cover, and we felt the tug of that irresistible impulse which strives in a fisherman's bosom at the sight of good water. We occasionally cast a Skinner spoon or a bucktail fly, but the fish knew the liberty of a stream full of fine hiding and good

feeding, and were wise in their day and generation, and disdained us.

There is this to be said about a fly-casting fisherman—he is never unhappy in the varying vicissitudes of his play. Every cast brings its own reward. He is a marksman at practice, shooting at a target. His continual failures incite him to other and steadier efforts. His successes urge an immediate repetition of his feat. He loves the very trials he meets. A poor cast that lodges his flies in the overhanging boughs may not at the particular moment seem a happy incident. It may cost him dearly. The wily antagonist who was watching the sporting flies skim the surface as they reached nearer and nearer his cover, sees in the accident his opportunity, and flashes into the noisy foam of a rocky shoal and is lost. This is hard luck. But during the long winter days of remembering, even that particular fouling bough that cost that particular fine trout will soften and englamour itself in the fisherman's reflections, becoming an incident of humor and a detail in the joyful labors of the summer day in the green wild woods, where the trout stream spoke to him and life lost its burdens.

While there are joys of the stream wholly

independent of the catch, let me hasten to say that the strike is a thrilling thing, of course. The fisherman is a philosopher satisfied in any event, but always welcoming a good, rolling break in the water under his fly and a healthy strike. He does his best to hook his game and gives the swaying rod and swishing line plenty of honest work that he may accomplish that end. He will acknowledge a profound sense of satisfaction at that moment when he lifts the cold, speckled beauty from the roaring stream and feels him wriggling in the net. This is a longed for, legitimate climax in the fisherman's emotions. He has had a dream of something like this in his mind from the moment he began to whip his singing line over the stream. It is not inconsistent with the general theory of a fisherman's inevitable contentment to acknowledge this fact. But the point to which every fly-casting stream-lover will testify is this—so delicious is the wilderness scenery and solitude, so satisfying is the play of dropping his flies upon some particular spot past all perils of entanglements, that every moment of his day gratifies him completely. He casts up his accounts and draws a balance in favor of unalloyed happiness

long before he opens his basket to count the tangible catch by which his neighbors insist upon judging the success of every fishing enterprise.

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The falling of a perpendicular rain through the major portion of the morning in no way spoiled our pleasure. In fact, it added to the interest of the occasion. What few supplies we had were snug and dry under a sheet of rubber in the bottom of the canoe. As for ourselves, when one wears Cape Cod slickers he is impervious to weather, so we paddled on through the pelting rain.

We were in the midst of a really beautiful spectacle. It was not unlike some miniature naval bombardment with thousands of shells dropping and softly exploding all about us. The water flashed back under each drop like quicksilver. The stream surface which at first was clear and full of reflections, now lay punctured and wrinkled like some dull metal in a state of flow, its sheen entirely gone. The snapping and sputtering of the bursting drops was a musical roar that no mimic storm-painter of the opera, not even Wagner, could reproduce in his weird tone poetry. Now and

then a gust of wind would take a part and send ripping, whirling wavelets across our bow and off through the reedy grasses at the margin.

It was a delicious storm. We bent low and drew under the thick, massive branches of a cedar that leaned close to the water and was so closely knit that no roof thatch of Burns's day could have done better service. As we sat under this deep, green shelter, we reveled in the beauty of the pictures about us and were grateful that things were as they were in the universe, even though it be hard at times to see beauty and romance in the storms.

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After a quick, quiet sweep around a heavily shaded bend we ran into the open session of a kindergarten where a dozen little mallard ducks, two days out of the shell, were being taught the art of tipping their tails in air in order to fish the shallow bottom among sedge roots for food. There was no prolonging of that school session after our silent prow had shown itself. There was a splash about six feet square and a storm of surprising dimensions in the stiff grasses into which the dismissed scholars scudded. Then all was still

and mysterious. Not a web-footed pupil was to be found. The secretive little water babies had escaped us and had done so by some prearranged signal of the mother. But the picture seen at close range was altogether beautiful and left no doubt as to the wisdom of that secretive instinct provided by Him who is mindful of the health and hunger of the smallest duckling.

The old passion for killing makes havoc with the spring broods and unhatched eggs of our waterfowl. These migrants come into our Northern climate on the return of spring in order to rear their families midst the wild rice and other seed plants of our breeding waters. They deserve better at our hands. A shot fired into a brace of spring ducks that rise over the fowler's head will generally leave an uncovered nest or an orphan brood somewhere in the dreary marshes. That nest is a crude affair, but one fact adds to it a bit of unforgettable tenderness amid the swampy waste—it is lined with the soft, warm down plucked from the mother's own breast. It tells of a maternal sacrifice that beautifies the rude pile of sticks.

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Some little difficulty was encountered in

meeting the emergency of the noon hour. The rain held up a little, but everything in the woods was soaked. At an open spot where a little charred circle on the ground told of the cooking efforts of other adventurers, we turned our canoe to the shore and found a spring pouring a cold stream into the channel from under the tag alders. The inside of a dead cedar is a blessing on a wet day. The ax laid open plenty of dry, resinous kindling, and the lee side of an aged and shaggy birch sheltered quite enough shredded, fuzzy tinder for the first match. When the fire rose crackling and the smell of smoke charged the air, we forgot the storm and, instead, felt all the passions of a victor who has circumvented odds and won the day. To speak of the broiled bacon, curled and crisp on a stick, and the steaming coffee that we turned from the little pot over that small cooking fire is to mention items of eating so intimately associated with the deep, green woods and the glad out of doors that upon their suggestion the gastric juice begins to trickle down the walls of the stomach of every forest-lover.

There is no end of descriptive minutiæ waiting the hand of a stream-lover who would

share his joys with his friends. Alongside of the wealth and glory of the real thing even the best picture is meager and unfinished. The kindling imagination of one who sits in a crowded, noisy city and thinks of the scent of pine that once smote his olfactories, or of a trout stream that once gurgled around his waders, must do the rest. God's great wilderness world is an indescribable mingling of order and chaos, of verdure and perfume, of music and silence. To appreciate it one must hide in its solitude and fellowship with its Creator in the vast and quiet shrine.

ON NORTHERN SHORES

Among islands of the North.

CHAPTER XIII

ON NORTHERN SHORES

WE crept along the uninhabited shores of Lake Superior till we were at a point on its hump nearest Hudson Bay. Then we left the mainland for an island twenty miles out. Sailing into a little harbor behind a cluster of islands, camp was set and everybody was glad to have at last escaped every appearance of the oppressive conventionalities of business and society. Here under the North Star, if anywhere, solitude abides unbrokenly, and waits to soothe the weary pilgrim who is willing to break into her sheltering silence. We were, consequently, shocked next morning to see riding in our land-locked harbor a

palatial yacht from the seaboard metropolis. There she swung between our green hills and amid the whirling gulls, as painfully extravagant and futile an effort to get in touch with nature as could possibly be imagined. It seemed to mock our search for solitude and the simplicity of nature unadorned and uncivilized. The water line where the shining white and green of the hull met measured two hundred and twenty-five feet, and her draft was fourteen. A crew of thirty-eight men, with a régime as elaborate and a discipline as severe as on a man-of-war, were in charge, and the quiet of the harbor was spoiled by the bells, night and day. Naphtha launches hung at her davits, electric lights transformed her at night into a kind of phosphorescent fairy craft; a great wine cellar ballasted her; cut glass and mahogany and all the appointments that luxury could suggest were at hand, and a chef five times a day laid tables with shining napery and monogrammed silver in a palatial dining room for as gorgeous a menu as the fastidious tastes of the high livers could ask. All this for four men whose fathers labored hard to lay the foundations of great fortunes!

We were eating fish chowder out of a dish

pan, served in tin cups and from the top of an old fish-house door washed in by the sea, when one of these scions of wealth, togged in sportsman's clothes, called and asked for information as to our island lake. Had he asked for the secret of health-giving, nerve-building, soul-enriching out-of-door life, we should have said: "Send that palace ship with her society atmosphere and burdensome crew and great wine cellar back to her home slip and come with us! Take passage in our old Mackinaw boat and eat fish chowder from our dish pan! Breathe the liberty of our camp life and dream our dreams at the side of our camp fire under the brilliant stars of this north country. Take part with us in our labors. Get three crackers and an egg and at to-morrow's dawn push with us into the bush behind our compass and work with your hands like a beaver, perspire copiously, rest often, fish the unvisited waters, at noon eat by some spring side, at night fight your way home, sit at our board, feel the papillæ on your tongue rise by the thousands and stand erect to meet our toothsome camp cooking served in the twilight, and then turn in with every vertebra weary from the jolting trail, to rest on our

balsam boughs! This, my jaded friend, is the way that leads to communion with nature and unalloyed pleasure! Your method is as pathetic as it is incongruous. You cannot have the exhilaration of solitude or an inspiring contact with nature by looking at Michipicoten Island through the plate-glass windows of a yacht and breathing all the while the atmosphere of the hotel de luxe." It was a relief to hear the rattle of the anchor chain as it was heaved, and to see the taffrail and the creamy wake of the screw as this exhibit of extravagant American society slipped between our islands and soon buried all but its plume of black smoke in the distance.

Lying high on the island in deep beds of Laurentian rock are many lakes of varying size. A government survey several years ago ran lines and established the altitudes of these rocky ridges. The interior is practically unknown and unvisited, the small lakes being unmapped and familiar only to a few guides. Up the rocky inlets that thread as tangled a bush as ever was found in forests, where the stream sings fiercely at times, the trout find access into the fine hiding of these island lakes. None but the brave need undertake to

reach them. One fights every inch of the way, but the reward is sure and abundant. By seven the company was on the trail, following a hurried breakfast in the cool morning, after a night spent deep under blankets. Channel Lake lies one mile inland, at the end of a trail relatively easy, which does not say much when one knows the other trails with which we relate it before we judge. The lake lies, three miles long, between gray bluffs whose precipitous rocks defy verdure with the exception of a few tenacious spruce, which make the most of but little footing. The ridge five hundred feet above carries waving combs of green birch and massed maples. With such a forbidding shore line, these lakes cannot be fished without a boat. To fight that trail with a boat on our shoulders was a daring piece of manual labor for soft-fleshed men, but when, after nearly three hours of hard work, we launched our clinker-built skiff, weighing about three hundred pounds, into Channel Lake, we were happy in having arrived at the goal of a whole winter's hoping.

Leaving the boat at the foot of Channel Lake, we took an east and west line amidst a jungle of undergrowth that made life

fiercely strenuous. It was a task in which all the resources of strength and patience, physical and spiritual, were called for. A "blaze" is to a trail what a cowpath is to Broadway. Five years had dulled the "blaze" to the vanishing point and healed all the broken twig ends that cautious woodsmen invariably snap behind them to guide them homeward. Our trio were kept close together but not too close, lest the bushes to which stumbling companions clung smite a stinging blow in the face when released. The return is always aided by breaking twigs as you walk. Look to your footing and put all the deftness you possess into your feet, for a misplaced heel or entangled toe will send you slipping, straining and prone amidst jagged rocks and interwoven underbrush, with your pack on your neck and your rod shooting javelinlike through the bushes. Go slowly. These twistings and turnings are drawing the hydrogen from unused muscles and will leave you stiff and sore. Do not hesitate by reason of false notions of a woodsman's prowess to ask for a rest. Do you hear the voice of that stream? It is so far beneath the débris of ages that unless you had heard its voice you would have passed it by. Get on your hands

and knees and creep into the gloom of this thicket and fill your cup at the fountain. Sit erect and drink. This is water sweet as dew and as cold as the everlasting shadows of the forests and the lingering snows of the spring can possibly make it. Drink deeply, for not again will you quaff such fresh, sparkling, life-filled water until somewhere, some time, you find another such hill-born spring stream.

After a few respirations and a story by Jo of a far worse trail of which he knew, we pushed on through as fine a grove of hard maples as ever sweetened the sap of New England syrup. There were no straight trees. These maples were gnarled and bowed under the weight of such abundant and continuous snows that they stood as a pathetic spectacle of deformed tree life.

Climbing what seemed the same hill a dozen times, we finally slipped down the last slope, and, threading a cedar swamp, came upon a little lake that legend had filled with trout. It was in a circular pocket of hills that dropped quickly to the shores. It looked deep and cold and trouty, and the very sight of it wiped from our memory the tedious tramp of the morning. Shod in waders, we sought the

shores. They were impossible save for a single opening. Tag alders rimmed the circumference and hung from five to ten feet over the coveted waters. A rock located ten feet from shore near the outlet and slightly submerged, proved a fly-caster's delight. There was room for clear ground for the back cast, good area and fine cover at the right and left. Deep shadows darkened the whole neighborhood and every prospect was pleasing. Filling one hip boot as I pushed out to the rock and awkwardly mounted the slippery, cone-shaped pedestal, I straightened my tottering form and surveyed the country. It was the promised land! I looked at my rod. The line ran well in the guides, the reel sang smoothly under the drag, the leader was pliable and carried three fine flies. A Parmachene Bell, a Royal Coachman and a Professor made the procession of tempting lures. Casting and recovering without touching the water, the line lengthened before it fell. A second cast and the flies fell in a most suspicious nook. If trout were to be located the story would soon be known and if we had wrought desperately for nothing, we would soon be advised. Drawing my flies slowly toward me, I prepared for a second cast with

a feeling of discouragement. But I was too slow. There was a rush for my Parmachene Bell from beneath the alders. It was a quick, hungry trout. He struck, and I hooked him, and at once my equipoise was violently disturbed. He plunged back and forth with every indication of a tenacious struggle. He was not great but gritty, and there was much noise and fury before he was landed and stretched his length across the entire bottom of the creel. Another lucky cast was quickly had, and another. The shadows on the right yielded four fine fellows. A rock sixty feet out gave me two, and a return to the first nook was met with good reward. I gathered fifteen speckled beauties from the rock in half an hour, none less than a foot in length, all deeply marked and brilliantly colored. It was a fisherman's coign of vantage and I was loath to leave it.

My struggling companions were fighting impossible conditions. Every cast from the shore fouled some overhanging bough, and every recovery caught some protruding tag alder. A raft was our only recourse. A dead cedar fifteen inches in diameter and seventy-five feet high was felled. It dropped in the

water's edge. Two logs sixteen feet long were cut and trimmed. Some rusty spikes from the ruins of an ancient dock at our harbor had been brought. Smaller lengths of cedar were split, flattened and spiked upon the logs to bind them together. A paddle weighing nearly forty pounds was made from a young balsam, and the first craft that ever floated on these waters was launched without ceremony. I rested on my laurels and took my position as steersman while my partners were joyous at their first opportunity for clean casting into the doorway of fine hiding places. The passengers of the crude craft were experts. One held two gold medals from a fly-casting club, awarded for delicacy and accuracy, and the other made reels of his own device and five-ounce goosequill rods for pastime. They were in their glory as they balanced deftly over the black water on that log craft. They had conquered all difficulties and faced victory. No finer work with rod and line could be desired. It was a beautiful example of skillful, gentlemanly, fair-play fishing. Their flies rode the quiet air straight to their destined end, and fell soft as shad flies upon the water. Under the low-hanging

birch, into a perilous circumference of roots, across the surface thick with lily pads, those flies rose and fell. Never did Neptune or any other water god see happier devotees than those aboard my craft as with well-nigh every cast they drew a trout to the stern, and I lifted the shining beauties into a common creel. It was an hour of conquest crowned with genuine victory. The great yacht floating in the harbor could give no joys comparable to the happiness of that hour aboard that rough cedar craft, that made footing for fishermen who refused to stop because a thing was apparently impossible.

We stepped to strange, quick music as we walked that difficult trail toward camp. Our satisfaction was real, for our ends had been reached. As we descended the hill lying last in the home stretch to where our tents were, and saw the smoke of the fire kindled by our hurrying cook, we felt that the day's work had brought us unusual blessings and a well-earned rest for the coming night.

The days merged rapidly into one another, and we began to suspect that our pilgrimage here was not everlasting. Yet the half had not been told. Jo was just beginning to draw forth the secrets of his cooking powers and

every meal surprised us. "Shall I build you bannick?" he asked one morning. "I mak you bread lak any masheen." Receiving an affirmative reply, for the bread had gone the day before, Jo gathered his white flour into dough and pressed it into the spider. It browned and rose slightly upon a bed of coals. He turned it and crusted the other side. Then, driving a stick into the earth close by the fire, he leaned his now self-supporting and stiffened "bannick" against it and let the camp hearth do the rest. When later I requested from this lovable and cheery Frenchman who for forty years had served as guide in the wilderness of Canada a bit of this camp "bannick" for my eager, housekeeping wife, always glad of new recipes, he said naïvely, "Be you tired of her?"

It was the breaking of a fine fellowship that came at the end of that busy, joyous fortnight. We carried home hearts hungry yet satisfied. We had been in the midst of a great solitude, and its silences had soothed our souls where the day and age had so irritated them. We had walked in unmapped country, and with our love for men just as eager as ever, had enjoyed this opportunity of escaping them.

THE DUNES

Sand dunes
"Silently as a dream the fabric rose."

CHAPTER XIV

THE DUNES

THE man that called Lake Michigan "a blue vein in the palm of God" was speaking with becoming reverence and rare poetic insight. In addition, he conferred upon us a spiritually laden metaphor that gives an everyday reality to the fine doctrine of divine immanence. The casual wayfarer knows that these articulated waterways, set deep in the middle of our land, are sweet, azure and life-giving. They pulse with slow but perceptible tides. They tone and purify the throbbing life centers set on their margins. The poet knew of the subtler things of anatomy as well as the facts of local geography when he erected this interpretative figure of speech.

There is a rare joy born into one's soul as he realizes that his ship is breaking its prow through the sweet, fresh, resilient tide of this inland sea. He knows he is not upborne by poisonous brine, the bitter residuum of ages of evaporation and a killing draft to thirsty men. Contrariwise, he knows that here beneath him is the untainted distillation of snowdrifts that, after lying long and beneficently on northern lands, gradually swept like some silent, unnoticed tide through meadow brooks and forest streams into this majestic basin. He knows, too, that these waters fall out of innumerable domesticated springs that sing beneath shaded and home-crowned hillsides. Be he country bred, he may have a vision out of the unpainted pictures of childhood's memory as he looks into these cool, clean depths from the lofty gunwale of his ship. This is it.

A bountiful and limpid spring at some hill foot, secreted beneath great willows that overhang with shadowing coolness the low roof of a stone milk house. Within is the old trough receiving the hill's bubbling bequest and detaining for a bit the waters on their way to the sea. It stands brimming with a liquid clarity transparent enough to break the spirit of any

lens-maker. A soft, melodious trickling that halts halfway betwixt a silvery tinkle and a tremulous tune fills that happy place with unforgetable music. Set there, unwatched, inviting, irresistible, when boys hot and panting from the hayfield come near, are pans of milk overlaid with cream so rich that it suggests ancient ivory, while athwart the trough's floor are bars of gold more yellow than that any bank vault ever knew, and in half-submerged receptacles lie spheres of cottage cheese that rise before one's retrospective mind in later days of shams like some tantalizing memory.

Of course, one must not forget the gigantic contributions that great rivers are making to these fine blue fathoms. The mystery of the greatness of these inland oceans disappears when one views the crystal Nipigon alone. It is, perhaps, one of the most beautiful examples of aërated, clarified, near-ice liquidity on the American continent, and pours its furious bulk from out its polar basin through as tumultuous a channel as the gamiest trout could ask. It, with the whole liberal family of rivers east and west, tells why these continental waters ever deepen, and the roaring outlet at Niagara is so vast and awful.

One feels as he slips from the mouth of the recently reversed and purified Chicago River and out into the silent highways beyond the water front, that he had unknowingly inhaled some obtunding ether. Apparently all at once his sensibilities become dulled to the clamor of the mighty city just behind the sea wall. In the midst of the suddenly softened and silenced atmosphere a kind of questioning awe takes hold of one. The apparent deadening to sound comes like some mesmeric spell upon eardrums worn by the ceaseless beating of city noises. The quiet breathing of the engines, the subdued swishing at the prow, and the gentle throbbing of the screws pushing their green and white twin tracks and swirling comber far out behind—all conspire to feed the heart with rest and quietude.

Here is an exhaling sweetness that antidotes and clarifies the belched fumes of the city and provides a fine deodorant that works to annul the ill smells incident to the creating processes of her industries. Here is a tonic resting for overwrought nerves. Panting men and beasts in the jaded hours of summer heat turn to drink deep drafts of cool breezes that rise and sweep in from the wide reaches of these

tempering waters. By the grace of this mighty benefactor, the contagion and noisomeness of a vast city are swept through one of the world's most wonderful man-made water channels. It contradicts nature's early planning and leads a city's sewage over the hills through fifty miles of rock-hewn bed, past smiling fields and out into the benign currents of the Mississippi. And so killing is nature's hate of impurity, and so effectively purifying is the trituration of these poisoned globules one against the other, that the goodly cities below are left without harm and the millions at the foot of Lake Michigan now drink uncorrupted waters, redeemed from pollution and death by the blessed ministry of this majestic, neighborly sea.

Lorado Taft has risen and from his perceiving soul has shaped in sculptured substance his tribute of admiration for the beautiful and mysterious spirit of the lakes. Unmindful millions whose very doorstep is laved by these sweet waters will waken to a deeper appreciation of the glory and the goodness of this divine bequest.

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Have you ever seen a sand dune at work? It has ages in which to finish a task begun

ages ago, and is in no hurry. It deals with materials minute and all but microscopic, and craves patience if its processes seem long and tedious. It works on very simple principles, and depends chiefly on dry crystals of sand and a sea wind to accomplish its stint of purposeless labor.

As the eastern shore of Lake Michigan rises over one's prow and breaks the hitherto unbroken skyline, long, shining cliffs throw back the western sun. Those "cliffs" are dunes. They stand on the horizon peaked and serrated like a mountain range half clad with snow. They are simply pure, clean, restless sands hurled high and temporarily lodged by ancient and ever-recurring storms that come trumpeting unhindered out of the North. Every grain of sand helps his fellow higher by allowing himself to be buried, and thus many peaks and ridges now clad beautifully in green are built two hundred feet high. Long, rounded drifts lengthen back from the shore line, and across these play the ceaseless sands. The surf, laden with sand, chafes and gnaws at the feet of these highlands, and as the work of undermining goes on, the hills slip down at stiff angles into the sea, leaving the bare white

bosom of the dune shining afar. Great trees topple and fall quietly forward, and, like dead kings, go to their death and burial wearing their royal garments. Noiseless rivulets of sand trickle constantly down these slopes and tell of a final humiliation of the whole proud, tree-crowned crest. This is the fate of dunes.

A little fishing village near old Saugatuck has dropped to oblivion beneath these grave-digging sands. Cabins are below you as you walk the high, soft ridge and taste the gritty breeze that always greets you. The winds now and then lift a whitish mist a few feet high and carry it landward until some obstruction catches it. Tree trunks on the hither side of the dunes stand buried to their branches, and vegetation, fighting bravely, finds the progress of the years throttled and life choked.

There are quick-growing plants and grasses that the government is calling to the rescue. They seem to have a desperate consciousness of the creeping death all about them, and work with magic swiftness to stop the deadly advance of this dune stuff. No sooner do the winds roll up and lay down their smothering burden than this battalion of nature's own national

guard springs to the task of anchoring these shifting sands. The jointed horsetail drives his piers, quick, firm and perpendicular, in order to stay the slipping. A soft, clean, strong plant with broad green leaves shoots down a mass of roots with surprising promptness and helps to tie large areas of newly planted lands. Grapevines are the dunes' great helpers. They fringe with green the barrenness, and work wonders in the art of staying restless grains of sand. When once the surface pauses and the slight bulwarks of these delicate plants are set, depend upon it, the victory rests with nature and there has been opened a new destiny of verdure and fruit. Capillary attraction works through these tiny crystals of sand, and, unimpeded by underlying stratum of clay, brings water to the roots; and on top of what would seem soil bereft of all nutriment will stand magnificent tree life and rich undergrowth. On these dunes, amidst these victorious trees, one finds clean, unbreathed air and a voice of freedom to which his soul heartily responds after bondage to the routine and convention of a laborious year. The sand absorbs the miasm. The wind's motion rectifies the atmosphere. The singing surface

A clean, lone shore on
Lake Michigan.

quiets the mind. The vision of a horizon suffused at evening with glories no city dweller ever sees, and quiet trails that muffle your footfalls and lead you through a near-by door to complete solitude, all put about these rising, falling, shifting hills a strange fascination.

Behind these dunes lie forests of varied growth, and beyond are the wide reaches of fruit land where in a soil congenial and in an air tempered by the lake, the blossoms of spring always hasten to their fulfillment. Farmers fill the land with prosperity and hospitality, and schools and churches bespeak those mental and moral tastes without which no land is beautiful, no fruit is sweet.

Over the crest of a great dune, yet scarcely remote enough from the shore to hinder the music of the surf from blending with the murmuring of the trees, I found the remnants of an old sugar camp. It was in wooded depths that were silent, green and rarely trodden. We set the old furnace aglow with wood gathered by the helping hands of children. We laid a roomy table as is fitting in royal banquet halls. The children, radiant with inherited and acquired wood joys, bore armfuls of ferns from near-by shadows and laid them across the

generous board. As sweet a package as any woodsman ever knew was opened and into the spider went strips of bacon wherein the lean ran in fine alternation with the fat. To the music of that well-watched spider on the roaring fire men worked—worked as happy men always do when permitted the rare and congenial thing, viz.: serving amidst an environment that excites new emotions at every turn.

In a great iron pail bubbled and tossed the juicy ears of corn plucked by the farmer neighbor. A pot of coffee sat purring on the well-fed fire, and sent forth an aroma like some breeze of Araby the blest, mingling its sweetness with the woodsy perfumes all about us. The eggs sat waiting for the moment when good camp cookery would suggest the breaking of their golden wealth into the busy spider. And when the voices of the invited guests were heard coming down the leafy trail, there were the joys of a host with his larder full, a menu complete and a mind at poise.

It was a happy crowd, with every one a royal woodsman. Hunger, a thing always imminent, and digestion born of the out-of-door life, brought all to the table ready for the worst but destined to receive the best. When

these happy wood folk gathered at the fern-strewn table and looked into one another's faces, and then up into the canopy of verdure over them and through the interstices to the shining sky and God above, it seemed to us that the religious and social problems that vex us were not so insoluble and that life's tedium was interwoven with much blessedness.

All ate with zest, and broke the quiet with many a burst of merriment. The quips and sallies that come only when workers lay down their burdens made the table talk memorable, and fellowship unspoiled by a single touch of artificialism crowned another summer day with a unique and everlasting memory.

When we had gathered our utensils and carefully put out the fire, we climbed the back slope of an old well-clad dune to the high, brittle edge where the avalanche of sands begins its sliding. There, from betwixt fine but doomed trees, we stood as had the red man before us, and saw the sun dropping to the water's edge through clouds of burnished gold underlaid with shades of amethyst and pearl. It was a day when the woods and the dunes had wrought well for us, and we were satisfied. We plunged shouting like Indians from

the headland through those steep, slipping sands to the cool water's edge, and there with the buoyancy of children removed our shoes and stockings and walked those soft, silken sands homeward. Only so far as life is permeated and moved by the childlike spirit will it keep its truest joys, and push with unbreaking hopes and a zeal that burns like a passion toward effective service in a needy world.

THE LAST FRONTIER

CHAPTER XV

THE LAST FRONTIER

I VENTURE to remark that the most gentlemanly and decent frontier line that ever broke the wilderness moved across the Canadian Northwest. Shades of old Cheyenne! How unbelievable—yes, how joyfully disappointing—was this domesticated and gentle way of subduing the untouched earth!

The old-time villains of our own Western frontier days did not feel invited to join this pioneer procession of the far North. Nor did any Indian panic—the usual pioneer terror—ever touch these new settlers. The Indian tenaciously loved these prairies. As I walked an old buffalo trail that started from the edge

of the Little Arm River, and led me to a hill crest, and stood sweeping my eye across a land blooming with autumnal beauty and fruiting with golden grain, I felt that no aborigines ever were called upon to give up to the white man more attractive possessions. Yet, since the absurd imitation of a rebellion led by Louis Riel in 1885, there has been no misunderstanding with these original settlers.

Sunday is a real day in the calendar of this remote Northwest. People who in other places decry blue laws and legislative infringement of personal rights, here settle down to quiet Sabbath-keeping. The harvesting machine rarely breaks the quiet of Sunday even in the imperative moments of the harvesting time, when minutes in the high zone are worth as much as hours in the lower latitudes. In explaining such a characteristic of this gentle, law-abiding frontier, I would quote the words of one of His Majesty's Royal Mounted Police, those splendid guardsmen patrolling these rapidly peopling solitudes: "It is the settlers that make the country and keep their own laws."

Great hearts and true gentlemen constitute the vast bulk of these new empire-builders,

and they build on principles of community life that are sincerely democratic and mutual. When last summer in the fine air of an August noonday a little three-year-old child of Saskatchewan went singing and alone out into the yellow wheat that billowed away to the sky line, and did not return with the night, one hundred and fifty settlers came as by some telepathic alarm, galloping over the plains to aid in the search for the little derelict adrift in the sea of standing grain. For more than two days and nights these Greathearts threaded that waving wheat and rustling oats, in singles and companies, mounted and afoot, and when the lifeless little form was found two miles from home in a shroud of tangled wheat stalks the whole township shared the sorrow and wrote down the tragedy in its quiet annals, to be recited to succeeding generations.

One has something of the feelings of an adventurer when he starts athwart these lines of latitude and creeps up the rounding shoulders of the world into the narrowing angles of the lines of longitudes. His untraveled sense compliments him for courage and makes him feel that he is achieving something rare. His pride is short-

lived, however, for a series of disillusions ensue. He finds first that thousands have joined him in this adventure; and there is no adventuring when a crowd is along. The big engines on the radiating roads which wizards of transportation are constantly laying down, earn their wages amidst a migration of nations unparalleled in history. They scarcely bide the last spike before accepting for transportation the waiting householders and their effects. The first train into a Saskatchewan station dropped twenty-one box cars of homesteaders' furniture and implements.

The pilgrims on their way to these new lands are not the anæmic crowd that jostles one in the cities. These men look like standard-bearers of an empire, ready for business. They are rugged, full-blooded workers, anxious for a task under the open skies! Never was there a more heterogeneous company than this vanguard of coming millions.

I sat on Sunday afternoon in the little cabin of a homesteader and shared in the religious service led in German by a Mennonite homesteader whose cabin was twelve miles away. There was lusty singing of German hymns by the company, which numbered fifteen,

seven of whom were men. The chickens under the cook stove were not in any wise inconvenienced by our presence. Two or three babies, bred in the clear air of the wilderness, rolled on the floor while the young mothers sang heartily and smiled at the precocity of their youngsters. The elder women also smiled reverently behind their large, strong hands at the antics of their grandchildren. We all knelt three times on the hard, uncarpeted floor to pray at length during that hour, and the spirit of worship was sincere and beautiful. There was a sermon that was much too long for the five girls that sat patiently on a board across two chairs. After the sermon the children were given a Bible lesson, and the service closed with much neighborly greeting.

I went out from that crude but hallowed sanctuary into the brilliant sun of the afternoon with much to think about that ought to concern state-makers and those who rule empires. Near by was a great stack of new-mown grass from hitherto unsickled meadows, and as I threw myself prone upon the soft, odorous heap I could watch the gently rising valley for miles. The worshipers in their wagons rolled out across the prairies over

trails still new, but soon to be worn into highways for incoming hosts of people. While those voices of prayer still echoed in my ears one could not but hope that these were the forebears of generations of their own kind and mind.

One never thinks of coyotes in wheat fields, yet one starry night I heard a chorus of these prowlers lift a weird treble from the hills, and as it swept across the ripe wheat behind our cabin it woke a big volume of baritone from the dogs in our cabin yard. Wild geese go circling across the fields, and their honking suggests a remoteness from civilization that the signs on the fruitful level scarcely justify. Ducks of every description crowd the lakes and sloughs and indifferently stand sunning their shining backs while one goes by. Sport loses all zest through the ease of bagging, and one learns to pass within a hundred yards of great, paddling multitudes of mallards, teals and greenheads without the rise of a single killing impulse.

This new land is already in an advanced stage of individual and community culture. There is a keen, popular appreciation everywhere of the nobler things of life, and a hint of

true feeling for art and the unadorned beauty of the world all through this uplifting empire.

When the poet Whittier lay seriously sick, this Northern wilderness, then in early blossom, paid to him homage that called forth a tender, characteristic letter from the old Quaker bard. During the anxiety attending the crisis in the poet's illness, Archbishop Teche of old St. Boniface, on the Red River, rang the bells in his twin-towered cathedral as a loving tribute to the man who, in celebrating the courage of the "Red River Voyager," spoke reverently of the "Bells of St. Boniface," whose solemn cheer had rung out upon the wilderness for nearly a century. Whittier wrote a touching answer when he heard of the testimony of affection, saying: "Manifestations of popular favor have ceased to satisfy one upon whom the solemnity of life's sunset is resting, but such a beautiful tribute has deeply moved me."

One night a big, red-handed man in overalls, who had filed on a homestead ten miles from town and was working under the section boss on the railroad in the dull season of farming, dropped into the tiny hotel with some village friends. The little parlor of the house with

its piano had been chosen as the spot most remote from the bar for a little quiet writing, and when the homesteader and his friends invaded the retreat, it betokened an evening of noise and boisterous fellowship. The quaint homesteader sat down before the instrument, thrust one heavily booted foot far to the right, and leaning forward as reverently as some devotee before a shrine, swept his long, lanky fingers strongly but softly over the meditative keys, evoking subdued inquiring harmonies that could only be born of a lofty and aspiring soul.

Thus began two hours of really wonderful music. From what seemed an impossible wealth of repertoire and a memory as accurate as mathematics, one after another of the noblest contributions of master minds in music was brought forth. Now and then in some passionate phrase he rose, and with one hand beating a fine accompaniment and the other speaking the dramatic fire kindling his soul, he poured forth a thrilling passage from the climax of some great opera. Then he softened our hearts and solemnized the crowd by the lofty measures and brave words of Lord Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar"; and

again he melted to tears every mother's son of us while, with simplicity and pathos wholly irresistible, he sang "Daddy." All this with qualities of tonal beauty that laid a spell upon one's soul. Then, radiant with the joys of the evening—for he had met appreciation—he went out into the wide darkness as suddenly as he came. By the bobbing light of his lantern my eyes could follow his trail across the prairie that led to his lonely cabin, and night rang down the curtain of mystery upon our unknown man of song.

One is surprised to learn that wheat can spread itself in such golden panorama and set its harvests with such glorified foregrounds and magnificent perspectives. Yet through a thousand miles the wheat stooks came marching down to the railway from under a sky line so remote that no guessing the distance was safe. In the shining afternoon an uncut section of "Alberta Red," waving in the lowering sun, runs in strange shadows and heaving billows. The clouds limn vast but ever-shifting continents of shade upon the rustling heads, and the winds, breathing athwart these millions of stridulating stems as over some majestic æolian harp, rouse such a full, deep

murmur that one knows not whether it is more like the subdued voice of ocean's surf dying after the storm, or like the portentous music of some slowly awaking sea wind soon to be furious.

And it only kindles interest still more intensely to know that what you see is not merely a prodigious offering of art materials which a Millet would idealize on unforgetable canvas, but a beauty quickly convertible to hard cash. You look at these nodding wheat heads, and you understand why bank buildings are always among the early arrivals in these treeless landscapes.

One understands why the grains grow so rapidly here, and how native vetches and cow peas, with rich, edible grasses, rejoice and everywhere fill the land with summer fatness. Besides the super-rich soil, which has been mulched with centuries of prairie growth, and toned by the gases and chemicals that ancient and ever-recurring fires have distilled, there is a surprisingly busy sun. He shines through an atmosphere that serves as does the glass roof over orchids. The fine atmosphere transmits in full strength the rays of the sun and holds them close to their task in a quickly kindling temperature. The northern sun is on

a very long open circuit in wheat time. He gets at the germinating grain shortly before three in the morning and does not drop below the rim of the furrowed earth till nearly eight. That means that these high-powered beams work from fifteen to seventeen hours at the height of the growing season.

A hundred mile ride across these painted prairies when the autumnal colors were at their height of brilliancy was like some daring film of the cinematograph. No artist would hazard his reputation for accuracy by reproducing on his canvas what I saw. The wild asters wore a high-keyed purple, more than royal. Goldenrod was a nebulous, aureate cloud lying at length upon the land. Long ribbons of fox grass rising in the deserted trails wound in and out amidst the higher colors of the prairie like a band of silver gauze. The Scotch thistle, big of blooming girth and stalky in its elder pride, stood here and there to cheer the sons of Scotia in their exile from heather bloom. The thatch grass in low swales and about the small, clear lakes bloomed in a white, feathery fluffiness. Saskatoon berries hung in abundance from fine, trim bushes set amidst the trembling poplars, and strawberries

in fabulous quantities at the season ladened the sunny slopes.

Now and then on the horizon at twilight there would lift from remote, roughened ridges, thick with buckbrush and popple, pyramidal tamaracks, fantastic groupings of cottonwood, the smoky plumes of a homesteader's supper fire. These were materials with which one's fancy quickly wrought. There was the architectural sky line of a great city, with spires and domes, and dark, unlighted façades of great buildings; and but for the stillness, the palpable solitude, and that sense of remoteness which irresistibly stole over you, your imagination in that fantastic young twilight would have duped you!

As one sees the present fine outwardness of this new empire, there arises out of the past the cheerless but heroic picture of that great pioneer of the Northwest, Lord Selkirk. It was in 1812 that his rugged, suffering Highlanders drove their way through the cruel wilderness from Hudson Bay, and sought in the dreary regions about old Fort Garry a new and freer Scotland. Breaking a trail from Hudson Bay to the Red River, through appalling difficulties, outwitting the treachery

and ugliness of commercial greed and jealousy, with the perseverance of Scotch saints, they planted the Union Jack and the bonny blue flag of Scotland in the vanguard of coming hosts.

Then, too, who can to-day really measure without prejudice what the Jesuit fathers did to set the gate of empire wide open for the after years? Their courage and consecration illumine the darkness and barbarism that lay upon the land, in the shadow of which were all forms of ghastly paganism and foul hate. In their great discovering, they gave a sacrificial manhood. René Menard, one of many heroic blackrobes, spent the whole night in a wakeful fervor of joyous prayer in his cell at Quebec just preceding the departure of his fleet of canoes for the perilous voyage to Lake Superior, and ere he sailed he wrote down a farewell to the world which, as an exhibit of holy abandon and happy Christian surrender, is unsurpassed. Only a narrow sectary would withhold the praise due these always resolute men as they made way for the light of a greater day. They wrought rudely in the dark, and mixed much medievalism in their teaching, but they blazed trails for caravans

of coming peoples and marked with their blood the posts of the gates through which trader and city-maker later passed.

There generally went with the Jesuit father the brave emissaries of the Hudson Bay Company. In 1670 Prince Rupert, a cousin of Charles II, heard from the lips of Grosseillers and Radisson, brave *voyageurs* who had journeyed into the wilds beyond Lake Superior, the stories of the marvelous wealth of this unknown land. It appealed to his imagination and cupidity. Here were empire and fortune. The prince fitted out two small but doughty ships which sailed away toward the luring land behind Hudson Bay. Upon their safe return and glowing report, the Hudson Bay Company was organized. From that day to this it has continued to be one of the world's greatest commercial companies. It became not only an agent of civilization, but the preserver of primitive barbarism as well. The Indians were the company's purveyors. Squaws trapped squirrel, marten, and ermine, while the men and boys went far afield after deer, buffalo, fox and beaver. Every new spring filled the solitudes with vivacity and movement. Over all the lakes fur-laden canoes

pointed to the solitary posts, and through the long, lonely trails carriers sought the stores of this great bartering company to exchange furs for cheap gewgaws. In 1867 Canada compelled a surrender of the Company's great domain. The Company asked and received one million five hundred thousand dollars and one-twentieth of all lands lying south of the Saskatchewan and west of Lake Winnipeg, with a continuance of all its posts of trade.

Before men take an inventory of the great modern *voyageurs* that have laid their steel highways through these new lands, they should have the preceding and contrasting story of the Red River cart.

This rude, two-wheeled wagon, made without an inch of iron, awkward, slow and unbeautiful, has left the imprint of its wheels upon the wide-reaching prairies and its influence upon all life as well. With axles ungreased and screeching like tortured animals, heavily laden as oxen could draw, long trains of these rude carts conveyed the new day and a great, growing, buying, selling, adventurous world into this Northwest. Where these creaking wagons went, the railroad later laid its iron.

When the historian of Canada comes to write his chapter on railroads he will have to be a biographer. There will be ample material about men of real greatness awaiting his pen. What here looks to us like the daring of adventurous promoters was the keen prescience and vision of patriotic genius. An intrinsic worth underlying all this land, undetected by timid, conservative faith, was a seen reality before the eyes of these bold, gifted prophets.

When, ere long, we move through the Arctic circle in parlor cars, and ride through gardens and golden grainfields in the Peace River country; when grain shipments pour out through Churchill into Hudson Bay, saving thereby six hundred miles en route to London; we shall feel that again fancy has been robbed of her cherished delusions concerning a country which misconceptions have covered with a haze of misunderstanding for two hundred years.

I saw the little trunk of a school-teacher going into a remote corner of a sparsely settled section of homesteaders fifty miles from a railroad. When I helped the postman to lift that brave girl's trunk from our wagon and carry it into the one cabin that constituted the Kelvington post office to await her call,

I felt as though I was identifying myself with the great, uplifting forces of a new land. I could do no other than glory in the courage and patriotism of that young woman.

A divinity student had heard the call of the unshepherded in this land of the sky and measured out to his conscience a circuit that swept through forty miles. He looked the gritty gospeler that churchless homestead regions welcome. He was shaping what as yet he could not see and charging with moral life conditions yet to come.

These two young pioneers stood for great, underlying vital currents of the higher life that one touches rarely on frontier lines, and if men but knew it they represent that which exceeds in interest the cereal glory and commercial power of any new land. These are the nobler, the more enduring qualities of this region's future, which relate themselves more intimately to its progress than the dollars in its soil or the showy spectacle of its industries. To have looked in upon these vital forces and factors of a coming empire and seen them at their inception, grappling with unique conditions, was to have witnessed a rare and inspiring spectacle in the world's life.

TO AND FROM THE MOUNTAINS

"Sun-bright summits mingle with the sky."

CHAPTER XVI

TO AND FROM THE MOUNTAINS

A UNION Pacific pile driver and work train took the side-track to let our long procession of olive-green Pullmans have the right of way across the gray plains. We sped on to liberty and mountain peaks set in limitless horizons and wrapped in an atmosphere awesome with suggestions of the infinite.

But a picture of the hard narrowness of human life fell on my eyes as we swept by an awkward string of miscellaneous cars standing in the shimmering heat on that lonely side-track. The cook and bunk car jostled on behind. In its red side walls were set two small, square windows, across which some one, not a

man, had stretched a width of mosquito netting. On the narrow, perilous ledge of one of the windows stood three old tomato cans in which struggled two geraniums and a violet, and in the rude doorway sat a mother combing the hair of a little boy.

There was no pausing to study the picture, but enough had been seen. With strange misgivings in my heart I carried the memory of that little boy and his mother shut into the endless heat and noise and grime of that box car as gradually I climbed to the roof of the world and turned to look down out of sunlit radiance upon sixty thousand square miles of God's free out-of-doors. The sweep of unaided vision from the upper altitudes, whence all lines of separation are lost in a dim, blue mystery, left in my soul a happy sense of deliverance from the circumferences that shut men into little places. But the memory of that little open window in the work train down on the plains under the fiery sun seemed to keep me close to the toiling world while I reveled in the clouds and sunshine of the mountain heights. This is as it should be, lest we leave the needy world and make mountain viewing our chief business.

Men who dwell on the plains of the Middle States and who at best have known only the Catskills and Alleghenies from flying trains, and the Adirondacks in their quiet refinement as an occasional summer playground, find their stock of descriptives inadequate before the gigantic mountains of the west.

One needs an appreciative and well-informed companion in this maze of mountain scenery. There are spots and peaks and vast ranges about which unwritten stories have gathered, and there is a thrill of joy in following the finger of a knowing guide toward these wild crests and snowy uplands where the ancient legends of red men lie. If the guide is a fine, nature-loving human being who casts a good fly and knows these wild trout streams, as well as the faces of these peaks, so much the better. And if he be bred in mountain lands, loving sincerely the solemn music of the cañons and alive to the beauty of line and color in the ranges, there is no other requisite to be desired.

Some one has suggested that Colorado starts where New Hampshire leaves off. The plains of her eastern front lie at the altitude of Mount Washington. Even at that height,

when touched by water, they bloom and bear harvests, the richness of which New England never saw. The whole group of the Alps would be trivial if transported into this commonwealth of mountains. The jagged, snow-peaked area of Colorado is five times the width of the whole Alpine wonderland.

There are a hundred peaks above thirteen thousand five hundred feet in height and forty above fourteen thousand feet. Everything higher than eleven thousand five hundred is in the zone of perpetual snow, so that a panorama of lofty whiteness, bleak but beauteous, is always appealing to the ranging eye. Then when into this picture the spectator works the lower details of a thousand crystalline lakes that gather snow water from dripping mountain eaves; the smooth, green expanses of many open parks, and the wild cañons down which six thousand miles of brilliant, musical mountain streams roll, filling the whole wide highland with mirth, he has something that neither Moran nor Bierstadt nor Skelton could adequately sketch or color.

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The locomotives perform circus tricks in taking one by loops and figure eights up the

continental divide. They play hide and seek in the mighty walled corridor and creep groaning up a granite stairway that the impertinent skill of the engineer has set in the mountain side. You squeeze through the chasm and around a daring curve only to find that the locomotives have eluded you and gone snorting around a second bend, pushed on by the unfaltering nerve of the engine-drivers. Engines go up this mighty gorge, two at a time, with hot fires roaring at the grates and every piston rod pressing home and lifting every pound possible. The hidden curve may reveal a landslide or a bowlder dropped from the mountain wall, for every foot is a mystery, yet these daring men, with doubly heated fires and steam chests crammed full and sizzling, open wide the throttles and draw their long trains up these twisting grades with the same composure as those who run on dull prairie roadbeds.

The Arkansas River and a long succession of ripping earthquakes did their best to break a gateway through the front range of the Rockies. It was a busy day in the timeless calendar of chaos when the Royal Gorge was opened. There are legible records of the

occasion. The knowing read and tell us the story of that morning. There were shocks and quakings as titanic forces disentangled themselves from granite labyrinths. There were fierce boomings that lifted and bent and fixed, at all angles, and for all time, these weird strata, and splotched them with every kind of gruesome dye. There were sizzling crevices that whistled like gigantic but futile safety valves, and an orgy of demonlike powers that finally broke forth, casting up great ridges and cones, balancing jagged columns on minute pedestals, and hurling granite débris in every direction. What other things may have happened can only be faintly guessed as one stands and looks about him.

These crustal burstings and spectacular calamities of creative days have left for us the most gorgeous grandeur and awe-inspiring beauty. The river has gone on to finish the task. Water only follows, it does not initiate cañon enterprises. But once in possession of some crevice, it goes on chafing, rasping, and biting deeper and deeper into the granite bed. It grooves chasms 'twixt walls, drills caves in jasper slopes, and lays up high shelves from which leap and roar splendid, snow-fed streams.

That splintered finger of stone, half a mile above, is twirling a fluttering cloud, which it seems to have caught out of the blue. A forest of lesser pinnacles soars in that clear upper air. What eyries for eagles! What foothold for conies and mountain sheep! Daring firs grapple for footing on projecting shoulders and, leaning over, hang the cañon with gloom. The smoke of the engines creeps slowly up sheer walls like the spirit of the gorge seeking to escape its prison enclosures. Now and then the sun, reaching into the somber shade of the chasm, paints the flesh-colored granite a fiery red and lays a brightness on the hanging verdure that, tapestrylike, beautifies the rugged walls.

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Dean Hart, of the Episcopal Cathedral of Denver, is the bishop of the Gunnison River where the greatest trout of Colorado live. This glorious river should be by all rights his titular see. I paid my respects to the great-hearted Britisher in his Denver home and learned much of the modes of the Gunnison, and a week later we were together tying flies on the rear of a train climbing up the narrow gauge road into Marshall Pass, on its way to

the river. The dean meanwhile discoursed of the beauties of the mountain way, and incidentally shared his gooseberry tarts with a Wellesley College girl who was seeking recreation on a ranch in the Gunnison Valley. So eager was the dean for the battle that he had exchanged every ecclesiastical habiliment for his great waders and fishing coat when yet nine miles away from the royal pools at Ceballa. There was nothing churchly left but a little black rosette on the broad-rimmed hat which he lifted to our party as he stood arrayed in the garments of the universal fishing guild. We said: "There goes one who knows how to mingle wisely and effectively the things of this human earth with the things of heaven and duty. He can walk out on the stage of a Denver theater and stop a Sabbath-profaning performance. He can mercilessly smite sin and injustice in his commonwealth and stand like adamant for the everlasting truth, against a thousand undermining influences. Yet he can cast the best fly on this noble river, and knows the art of taking in manly fashion the most royal fish in the world."

The Gunnison rises in so many cold mountain

corners that there is but little use in trying to locate its source. It sweeps down the western slope of the continental divide behind the Elk Mountains, and is fed by the drippings of Mount Ouray and scores of lesser sunlit, snow-crowned peaks. It runs full and strong the season through and for the most part three hundred feet wide. Naturally, it takes unkindly to the confinement of the frequent gorges and makes much ado in protest. But here is the fisherman's paradise! There are reaches for casting, and great bowlders amidstream, over which the clear water tumbles and behind which the great chiefs of the finny tribes lie. Then there are roomy cabins wherein are sweet, bountiful food and comfortable, airy sleeping places.

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Helen Hunt Jackson has painted these highlands in colors glowing but true. She had a love for the grandeur of her adopted and rugged homeland that was born of an unusually penetrating and interpretative soul. About no feature of the landscape does she speak more charmingly than of the wealth of flowers that garland these mountain slopes. Trees are commonplace, but to view these trees with

the eyes of "H.H." is to see new tints of verdure and new glories of autumn color. The pentstemon hangs such a brilliant blue from its staff that one hesitates to describe it lest it be considered an overtoning of nature. But nowhere else save in Colorado have I seen such a deep, radiant blue. In contrast to the pentstemon is the Indian paintbrush. It glows like a low, running fire creeping up the yellow mountain side. No dye could be redder. It is the mountain's piquant color and gives tone and dash to the rugged picture everywhere.

The "forget-me-nots" of Pike's Peak are sky-blue and of perfect form. The anemone is a shaggy beauty, opening great, pinkish petals and rising out of a bed of fuzzy leaves. There were both humor and truth in the heart of "H.H." when she called this flower a "crocus in chinchilla fur." The cloud of white bloom that furls about gray rocks in such profusion is "baby's breath," while on the plateau acres of mustard lighten the green with golden sunshine. The coarse yucca sets its spikes in great bunches on mesa and mountain side and lifts a stout central stalk heavily weighted with bell-shaped flowers. The spirea and

cactus and kinnikinnick are here and speak of the variety in character and beauty of these mountain flowers. There is a suggestion of royalty in the stately columbine. It grows in such profusion and with such an air of proprietorship that Colorado has adopted it as its state flower. It was not the outburst of an exaggerated emotion but floral facts that led a mountain-lover to call these mountains of the west "a symphony in yellow and red."

Thousands and thousands of men and women, young and old, look up into these shining skies and thank God for the restoring atmosphere. They brought ills from the lower altitudes and here found new lungs and stout hearts. They came at the first call of disease. They went into the battle bravely. They found diversion in the scenery. Introspection and morbidity were impossible and the best in them of nerve and body was continually called on. Dry air and sunshine disinfected cell tissues and life became fresh and new again.

In a cañon where at night all was still save the singing stream and where in the day there were sublimity and solitude all about, we lay down to sleep. It was the sleep that childhood

knew. It .smoothed all wrinkles from the brain and put new energy into every depleted muscle fiber. In the morning we fed as men who were insatiate boys again. Then we climbed the mountain side, shouting through the sunshine and feeling that Matthew Arnold knew these very mountains when he wrote:

> Reared in white ranks against the blue untrod;
> Infinite, wonderful; whose uplands vast,
> A lifted universe of crest and crag,
> Shoulder and shelf, green slope and icy tarn,
> River, ravine and splintered precipice
> Lead climbing thought higher and higher;
> Until it seems to stand in heaven
> And speak with God.

El Capitan
"Green calm below, blue quietness above."

THE SUMMER TIME

CHAPTER XVII

THE SUMMER TIME

LET us talk of the summer time. Some men think that talking of the summer time, as poets and nature-lovers talk, is a childish employment, hardly proper for strong-minded men. Therefore, they do not talk about it. Some men are so busy digging in the glad earth, putting in their seed, scratching the soil and watching the market reports, that the whole glorious procession of the summer time passes by, and all they get from it is a crop that crams their bins to the top and stuffs their garners to bursting. They have nothing to say. Some men have let their sense of the beautiful and significant things of summer

become dull and listless through familiarity with the oftrepeated spectacle. So they have nothing to say. To them it means a few more days of sunshine alternating with a few more days of rain, a few changes of clothing, a few new items on the bill of fare—nothing more.

Blessed be the man who is not ashamed of a little honest ecstasy over the beauty of the summer sky as it lies above him in fathomless depths of blue and shuts him into horizons that never touch the earth! Happy he who is healthy enough to feel the thrill born of the thrush's evening song and sensitive enough to respond to the subtle charm that lies in the solitude of the summer wilderness! With passionate feeling he watches the summer come over the hilltops of the world and with its waving banners of green sweep athwart the fields and meadows, driving out the desolations of the winter and filling the whole land with the odors of its bloom and the rich treasures of its fruit. The glad man says: "This thing feeds my soul. This is God moving in his world. These green fields are velvety widths beneath his majestic feet. This verdure of mountain side is the mantle with which he shrouds his ineffable glory. The

voices that go in the trees and noisy streams and breaking surf are his. The bounteous fruits and grains that fall upon us are poured out of his treasure house, and I walk in the midst of this prodigious life of the summer in close companionship with him."

Open your eyes, illiterate man reading only in printed books, and look! Be not as Peter Bell, who on the river's brim saw nothing with his soul. The man who has so subdued his higher nature and so aborted himself that he does not enjoy with more than ordinary feelings the out-of-door things in God's summer world is like a blind man moving through a corridor where hang canvases that Corregio and Titian and Giotto painted, all unmindful of the rich colorings that generations of artists have agonized to duplicate. He is in company with the world's master minds but is not companioning with them.

The physical uses of the summer are plain, and men in general appreciate her economic meanings. They look at the calendar and note that the sun has started back. The long night drops a few minutes at morning. The twilight lengthens noticeably. The snow slips into the streams. Arbutus sweetens the air.

Hepaticas, anemones and crocuses fleck the brown floor of wood and field. Straggling companies of bluebirds arrive and robins take their old haunts. Something is getting ready to be done. Men catch the hint. The winter idleness is over. The plowshare is thrust in. All day long the fields are worked in order that the earth shall be made ready. There is sowing to be done. Moments now are hours in the autumn. The seed is sown; then growth follows. Stem and stalk appear, and bloom is hung out in the quickening air. And when the summer's physical uses are realized in autumn ripeness, the gardens and fields and orchards confer their wealth, and the larders of hungry men are filled for the winter time. There is no need to preach on the physical uses of the summer time to thrifty men. They know.

Is the summer a thing of clods and seeds and sweat and nothing more? When one has his crop in the barn has he all that the summer was intended to give him by the great Summer-giver? Is it more than a season in which to gather things for the winter stomach?

One of the chief spiritual uses of the summer is the revealing of ourselves to ourselves.

Every time a man sees something new in the world, he finds something new in himself. What a man thinks of the trees and birds, of the sea and mountains and the whole panorama of the summer spectacle, is an exposition of himself. What you see reveals you. We do not so much interpret nature—for nature needs but little interpretation—we interpret ourselves. We look at a tree or flower or gorge and see what is in us of tastes and feelings and power to know. Ruskin, writing of nature, interprets Ruskin with all his wealth of moral ideals and wonderful imagination. He fills the lap of earth with the riches of his own spirit.

This being so, summer has a new meaning to every man. Is the summer earth to this man simply a mammoth heap of warm, rich soil in which to plant seeds out of which to take harvests? Then that man is very near the clods he treads upon. Does the summer come and go and awaken no new sensations, stir no new feelings? Then that man is getting dull and unresponsive before great thoughts of God in his revelation. Is the man afraid to eulogize nature and speak tenderly of what she is to him? Then I am afraid of

that man. Does he boast of indifference to the joys that other men find in their communion with the woods, and scoff at the enthusiasm of the man who finds pleasure in a view from a hilltop or down a wild ravine? Does he look at a pine tree—a monarch of two hundred winters, proud, stately, sweet-smelling, rising in the air that it helps to purify with its balsamic odors, and instantly fall to computing how many feet of lumber it would cut? Does Niagara overwhelm him with its stupendous beauty so that he stands speechless before it, or does he think at once of the number of spindles it would turn by its harnessed energy? What are his thoughts before a field of ripened grain pulsing in the evening breezes like the waves of the summer sea? Does he see beauty and God's goodness there, or something for the market next May? Tell me what you see in the summer time and I will tell you what you are. God intends this as one of the higher purposes of the summer, that it shall show us to ourselves. He changes the scenes on the stage and watches the effect on us. Are we keen enough to appreciate and applaud, or do we sit dumb, glum, and unimpressed? What we see says to men and God what we are.

Again I cannot help but believe that the summer time is a kind of high tide in God's self-revelation. He issues at this time a kind of *edition de luxe* of his own autobiography. Of course, he walks forth in the winter time and men see him. Snowdrifts and bare hills and brown tree trunks do speak of God, but in the royal, plenteous life of the summer we seem to walk in more intimate fellowship with him. The imagination can reach him better in the forest draped with green and melodious with bird song and sweet with fragrance, than in the deadness of the winter. This is reasonable. The forces behind the summer are near to us, and their results are tangible. God's existence seems so positive and undebatable as we look at the rich, growing, fruiting earth.

The chemistry of the soil says to us: "The great Chemist made all these elements and knows their magic power. His hand feeds the juices into bud and leaf and root, and causes these subtle changes in cell and tissue that we call growth. He distills the dew in his own laboratory and precipitates the rain by his own formula." Every rosebud says: "God is the rose-maker; imitate him if you can." The brooding songster on the bough says:

"God cares for me and mine, though men are cruel." In the solemn aisles of the woods, by the shores of leafy-bowered lakes, and from out the low, deep music of the sea, God's voice is heard by those who listen. These summer voices join in saying that this is not a world of chance where atoms have fallen together by some strange lawlessness of their own. This is not a decorated playground, which has for its purpose the mere amusement of man while he lives and the covering him over in everlasting silence when he is dead.

This is God's autobiography and portrait of himself. Here he writes of his power, his wisdom, his plans. He has spared no pains in its preparation. He has laid on his own choice of coloring. The colors are daring, contrasting but never jarring, and they renew their fadeless beauty with the years. He loves beauty, so his autobiography says; so he hangs the mountain-side with the varying green shades of the spring, lays on the deeper tints of the summer, and flings out the gorgeous banners of scarlet and gold in the autumn. And all in this fine, kaleidoscopic shifting of the colors there is not one tint that shocks nor one line that breaks with the laws of harmony.

In this prodigious volume there are foot-notes that we are not wise enough to read as yet, and addenda that coming years will make plain. Beautiful symbols mystify us, and hints of things too great for us are everywhere.

To open your eyes and ears and make bare your heart to the appeal of the summer time is to meet an argument that a conscientious man will not evade. One good, fair, reverent look will bring a man to his knees before God, and he will say: "This is my Father's world. If for this fleeting, perishing thing, he has spared nothing, but wrapped it in beauty, crammed it with fruit and sowed it with undreamed-of possibilities, what will he not do for me, his child made in his image? Shall I have him heap beauty on me and yet keep an ugly soul within? Shall I see him save this old earth out of the desolations of the winter and clothe it with life and loveliness and not help him to save and glorify my life?"

Y. W. C. A